

### A Message from Our President Julie Stern

Dear Members:

This summer has been a fun and lively season for the Corona Historic Preservation Society and its members with many new developments with projects upon which we have been working.

The most exciting development, and a great victory for both the City of Corona and CHPS, is we have managed to save two historic homes slated for demolition on Seventh Street near the Corona Public Library.

One home, is the Brumbaugh Landmark Home, will be moved by a CHPS Board member. The other will be moved by the City to be used as low-income housing. We have also heard "through the grapevine" that another vintage home near Corona City Park is soon to be moved as well. It has been a long and complicated process to get this vintage home relocated.

Other recent projects and developments to report:

♦We were able to salvage beautiful vintage windows, light fixtures and doors from the Seventh Street homes for preservationists to utilize on future projects.

♦We rode in the 4th of July parade in a beautiful



4th of July Parade: Sitting above (L-R) Julie Stern & Aaron Hake. Seated below (L-R) John Kane & Christine Gary

antique 1956 Ford Thunderbird provided by our vice president and her husband, Chris and Glenn Gary. A special thank you to the Garys for allowing us to create an entry with this car and ride in style.

♦We had our Quarterly Meeting on August 18 where we toured the City Archives Center. This was a fascinating and very informative event.

♦Several of our CHPS Board members as well as CHPS members attended the fabulous fundraiser to save the historical Norconian Club.

♦We participated in meetings with City and community leaders to discuss the development of downtown and provide insight coming from the historical perspective.

In closing, I would like to invite you to read my article, featured in this newsletter about the Jacob Stoner Home and wish you all the best as we move into the Fall festivities.

Yours In Preservation,

*Julie Stern*



### Huell Howser Show to Feature "The Norconian Resort Supreme"

On Tuesday, September 4, Huell Howser will host a 28 minute TV episode of his "California's Gold" series filmed at the Norco landmark built by Rex Clark in 1929.

The show will air on KCET on Tuesday, September 4 at 7:30PM, and again that same night at 12:30AM.

If you miss both of those times it will be aired again at 7:30PM on Monday, September 24 and on Wednesday, November 21.

The hotel once regularly hosted Hollywood stars, local and national sports figures and important political personalities. It was converted to a naval hospital to treat soldiers wounded at Pearl Harbor. This regional historical landmark now sits on the grounds of the prison and Naval Surface Warfare Center.



# Our Visit to Corona's Archives Center by Richard Winn

On Saturday, August 18, 2007 an enthusiastic group of our members, including Mayor Eugene Montanez and Councilmember Karen Spiegel, gathered in Corona's Archives Center located in a special warehouse at the City's Corporate Yard to visit the only archival repository in the County of Riverside, view historic documents and listen to learn more about the facility by way of presentations by City Clerk Vicki Wasko and her staff.

The tour began with a brief history of the origins of Corona's climate controlled secure area where Corona is able to preserve its vital and historic records, including ordinances, resolutions City Council minutes, agendas, actions and land records such as deeds. City Clerk Vicki Wasko described how our City Council back in 2000 had the foresight to see the value of record preservation and act upon it to give Corona a world class climate controlled (68 degrees F with 30% humidity) repository with space for 2,187 boxes of records and the capacity to expand another 1,194 boxes. The facility is managed by the City Clerk's office and the Clerk is responsible for all records stored there. When asked if researchers would be able to see and handle the original documents Vicki emphasized that copies of all these records are available on other media (digital, microfiche or other) for researchers to minimize damage and deterioration of the original documents.

Records Specialist Lorena Verduzco provided a clear and concise description of the facility's state-of-the-art environmentally friendly, clean, rapid extinguishing agent FM 200 fire suppression system. The versatile clean agent is active on a fire but non-toxic to people. It is odorless, col-

orless, electrically non-conductive, non corrosive and leaves no residue when discharged. When discharged, the gaseous vapor rapidly penetrates enclosed areas to get at the source of the fire, reaching areas that water or dry chemical agents cannot.

Assistant City Clerk Debi Thomsen wrapped up the formal presentation with a demonstration of how records are preserved. She showed us that the first thing that happens to a document is that any staples, clips or other attachments are



**From L-R: Mayor Eugene Montanez, City Clerk Vicki Wasko, Debi Thomsen, Lorena Verduzco & Councilmember Karen Spiegel viewing the display of historical items**



removed then an acid free folder is opened and a piece of acid-free tissue is placed on it, then the last page of the document is placed on top, then another sheet of tissue is placed on top of the page, then another page is added until the document is finally collated and placed in the folder with acid-free tissue between each page. At this point the folder is placed in an acid-free box for storage. All documents are handled the same. Important city documents recording the city's legislative history are actually printed on acid-free paper, but are treated the same as other documents for storage.



**A few rows of CHPS members listening intently to the presentation at our Quarterly Meeting.**



## Archives Center Tour (continued)

Several historic documents were on display for members to see and handle (with white cotton gloves, of course). Among these were two 1896 documents nominating the names that were to appear on the ballot for the renaming of South Riverside. One suggested name was "Superior" the other was "Corona." The final vote tally for the naming of Corona was also available for viewing. It showed that of the 143 votes cast, the name Corona received 120 votes. "Circle City" came in second. Also there was a Corona Foothill Land Company stock certificate issued to S. B Hampton, the letter from the Carnegie Foundation to Library Board Secretary, T.C. Jameson, verifying a \$10,000. donation for the construction of a free public library, a letter signed by President Ronald Reagan expressing his regrets in not being able to participate in the City's Centennial Celebration in 1986. The proof drawing of Corona's centennial logo from 1996 and a couple of newspapers were also on view: the *Corona Independent* (Thursday, March 30, 1911) and the *Corona Courier* (date was not

visible).



Assistant City Clerk Debi Thomsen discussing the contents of this storage container with Karen Spiegel.

## I Remember When ... Memories of the 50s by David Aguayo

David Aguayo was born and raised in Corona. Upon graduation from Corona High School in 1964, he received the first ever Evelyn Bartman Memorial Scholarship to attend Occidental College. David went on to earn a Master's Degree from UCLA, does clinical social work, lives in the Hollywood Hills, and is a regular contributor to this newsletter.



the railroad tracks.

### I Remember When ...

- ♦Breathing air pollutants that made my lungs hurt and caused my eyes to burn.
- ♦Looking with wonder at the long, sometimes colorful, streaks of vapor in the sky (contrails) left by missiles fired from Vandenberg Air Force Base.
- ♦Watching the Basque sheep herders framed across the sky as they herded their sheep in the Corona hills.
- ♦Sitting outdoors with the hobos who knocked at our door as they ate sandwiches and drank kool-aid my mother prepared for them -- they rode the nearby trains and camped in the shrubbery along

♦Thanking the driver of the Ready-Mix cement truck who, as he drove by, noticed a tarantula entering our yard and promptly jumped out and killed it.

♦Collecting spent bullets embedded in the bluffs below Sunnyslope Cemetery, an area once used by the police department as a practice firing range; I would

sell the metal fragments to the junkyard (towing yard?) next to the snowcone store on Quarry Street.

♦Marveling at the classic car display at a gathering on the north side of Grand Boulevard near Victoria Avenue and enjoying watching two of the cars play teeter-totter on a giant see-saw composed of huge wooden planks.

♦Competing in the yo-yo craze in elementary school ("Around the world" and "rock the boat"), seemingly always losing to the champion, Tom Rothrock.

♦Reading from my elementary school's science newsletter about how the Russians sent a satellite into orbit -- the Sputnik.

# The Jacob Stoner House by Julie Stern

I was very fortunate one day to meet a very nice gentleman by the name of Mr. Glen Chaffin at the Olde Tyme Community Picnic this Spring. We struck up a conversation at the CHPS information booth about the historic homes in Corona and how we were working to preserve these homes. Mr. Chaffin had some great ideas and advice about preserving old homes, as he is an expert on this subject, having lovingly restored one of Corona's prestigious historic homes located at 1939 S. Main Street, The Jacob Stoner House.



Mr. Chaffin was kind enough to give me a tour of the home and a copy of a rich and thorough write up regarding the history of the home that he completed himself. I was so impressed with what I learned that day, that I thought it would make a very interesting story for our CHPS newsletter.

Jacob Stoner, the first owner of the home, was a direct descendant of Michael Stoner, a first cousin to Daniel Boone and a partner in several of the Boone expeditions. Mr. Stoner was the director and vice president of Corona National Bank, and president and director of the Orange Heights Fruit Association. Mr. Stoner employed Leo Kroonen, a famous local architect in the 1800s, to build an elaborate Victorian Home for the cost of approximately \$6,000. The house is a beautiful example of a "Victorian Carpenter's Gothic" with an original cast iron widow's walk, normally seen only on the East Coast.

The house has several authentic and ornate tin ceilings salvaged from the Keller Building which once stood in downtown Corona. The ceilings were salvaged when the city forefathers decided to raze

the old downtown to the ground in 1968, to make way for redevelopment, an unfortunate and fatal mistake for the well-being of businesses in old Corona. The new Downtown Corona never reached its former level of prosperity that it had experienced with the charming old buildings its forefather's had built. Mr. Chaffin paid a fee to the city to save what he could from the rubble. He found his beautiful, large tin ceilings that had

once decorated the local dance hall and saloon amidst the rubble, pulled them out with out too much damage and installed the tin artwork himself on the inside ceilings of the Jacob Stoner House. These ceilings contribute greatly to the authenticity of the restoration of the home, creating a pure Victorian experience when one enters the home. As one tours the home, the woodwork, wallpaper, chandeliers and furnishings all come together, creating an effect that makes you feel as if you are reliving the Victorian era.

Mr. Chaffin has also showcased, within the home, genuine Corona artifacts, from the turn-of-the-century era when the city was founded and built.

Some of the past residents and owners of the home were Dr. Denver Roos, an Assistant District Attorney to San Bernardino County, a New York lawyer and his wife, a former showgirl whose daughter eventually became Playboy Playmate of the Year in 1956 or 1957. Mr. Chaffin and his wife are the current owners and are experts, builders and suppliers for authentic Model T's.

Again, I would just like to thank Mr. Chaffin, for this wonderful tour and for allowing me to share his home and its important history with our readers.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Saturday, September 15: Presentation on Corona Citrus Labels**

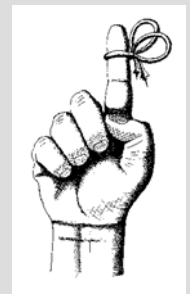
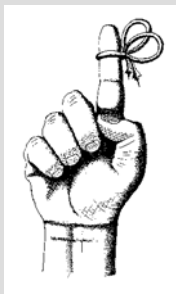
**Sunday, October 7: Corona Lemon Festival at the Civic Center**

**November: Ribbon Cutting at the Historic Civic Center**

Watch for details in the next issue of this newsletter

**Thursday, December 6: Our Annual Holiday Party**

Watch for details in the next issue of this newsletter



# Corona Citrus Label Collector



Our next Quarterly Meeting will feature a presentation by Linda Faxon, a Corona resident who has collected Corona citrus labels for over 30 years.

Please join us, see the original labels and learn about them yourself!

**Date & Time:** Saturday, September 15 at 10AM

**Location:** Community Room of Historic Civic Center  
815 West Sixth Street

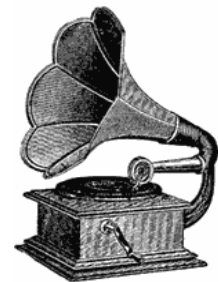
Light Refreshments Will Be Served



## The Society's Ongoing Activities



- Monthly Board Meeting
- Bimonthly Newsletter
- Historic Marker Program
- Cemetery Walk at Sunnyslope Cemetery
- Vintage Home Tour
- Annual Heritage Home Awards
- Oral History Program
- Annual Holiday Party
- Educational Seminars and Field Trips
- Community Preservation Projects
- Vintage Home Relocation Assistance





## Annual Reunions Keep Esparza Family Strong by Lydia Avila

After several trips to the United States for work purposes, the Esparzas settled in Corona in 1919. If the Esparzas are not the oldest family from Mexico settling in Corona, then they come pretty close. Brothers Jose and Ruperto, Jose's sons, Juan and Ysabel arrived in Corona, having migrated from a small village, Villa Garcia, in the state of Zacatecas.

Their stateside history begins when four young men left their home in Villa Garcia, Mexico to begin working in Kingman, AZ doing construction for the railroad. The railroad then directed them further west to Needles, CA. Railroad cars became their housing accommodations. Their line of work eventually brought them to the Santa Fe Railroad Depot in Corona.

As family members began to feel at home in Corona, Jose purchased land on Blaine Street where five homes were built. They were quickly occupied by family members. Juan Esparza worked at Corona Lumber. It was here they purchased the lumber to build their homes. The homes consisted of two rooms, a kitchen and the living room which also served as sleeping quarters. One outhouse was shared by all five families. Taking a bath was a chore. Water was heated in a wash tub by placing it outdoors over an open fire. Nicholas Esparza was the last family member to live on Blaine Street until he passed on in 2006.

The Esparzas attended Washington School on Grand Boulevard. This is where they learned the English language and to read and write. As the children grew, they never felt that they had missed out on anything. They had such a rich family heritage to support them. Each child at the start of school was bought one pair of tennis shoes that needed to last the entire school year.

In the 1920s some of the local Corona stores shopped were La Esperanza Market, Eva's Market and Jose Cervantes Market. From their \$1.00 a week allowance they spent Saturday afternoons at Cruz's movie theater on Main Street. Here they enjoyed episodes of early movie westerns.

Juan Esparza's daughter, Teresa Esparza Avila,

recalls the excitement of the sound of ringing bells; it was Jesus Perez approaching in his horse carriage selling ice cream cones. Could he have been the original Good Humor man?

With families multiplying, the Esparzas left their homes temporarily in 1928, heading to Northern California for seasonal field work. They packed all necessities along with their mattresses which were tied to the roof top of their cars. The caravan made their first stop in Fresno to pick grapes, then moving on to Corcoran to the cotton fields. Families were able to get other work harvesting plums, apricots and potatoes. This was an annual trip the families made. Ask any member of the family, they will state they put in a hard days work for little money. This was no vacation. At the end of a long, hot summer, they returned to Corona. Eventually, family members began working locally, in the citrus groves, located near the temporary worker camp off Chase Drive, known as "El Chase".

In those days, the entire family had to go to work at a young age. This ensured that the family had enough money to live on. Education was secondary. Most quit school at an early age. As the children grew, the many cousins would meet on Sunday afternoon at the Corona City Park on East Sixth Street.

They soon began to marry. Weddings were a big celebration for the Esparzas. Ceremonies were held at the old St. Edwards Church on Sixth Street. Immediately following, the reception took place in their backyard just a few blocks away. Typically, all the women would cook the entire meal which consisted of homemade mole (chicken smothered in Mexican sauce), beans and rice. The wedding party would have the honor of sitting under the shadiest tree.

Many Esparza family members have been blessed with musical talents. Jose, Juan, and Ruperto played violin; Ysabel played Mandolin and brother-in-law, Ramon Ortiz played guitar. They often were the entertainment of the evening. Guests danced to the sounds of Mexican folk songs that could be heard through the entire neighborhood.



# Membership Information

**When joining or renewing your membership, please make out your tax deductible check to CHPS.**

Individual Member	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>I'd like to volunteer for:</b>	
Family	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Membership Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patron	\$100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Board of Directors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Gift from \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status: Renewal  New

**Please complete and mail to:  
CHPS**

**P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, CA 92878**



## We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

JaNell Acosta  
Mary Elizabeth Bylin  
Eliza Orozco Gonzales  
Aaron & Lauralynn Hake

Nick & Michelle Koranda  
John & Barbara MacCawley  
Katharine T. Nichols  
Victoria Wasko

### The Esparza Family (continued)

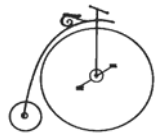
In the early 1920s, family members formed a band called *The Blaine Street Blues*. The family continued to grow larger. Some 40 years later in 1963, another Esparza band formed called *The Ravens*. Shortly after, the members formed a second band also called *The Blaine Street Blues*. "No better name could be thought of than to name the band after the street they were so proud of," says Tony Esparza. The band members consisted mostly of family members and close friends. They played for 12 years.

Today, Esparza family members are scattered throughout Corona and other nearby



cities. The Esparzas are celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Reunion on September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 in beautiful downtown Corona. Since the idea arose in 1997 it has been an annual event ever since. The family unites each year to celebrate and to honor their forefathers. As many as 300 get together for these family celebrations.

Driving by Blaine Street today is a different story. Now you find the Metrolink station and a parking lot. Only the memories in family member's minds and hearts remain. Any Esparza will confirm our roots belong to the City of Corona. Now the baton has been passed to a new generation and the future of the family is now in their hands.



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

## Board of Directors

President - Julie Stern  
Vice President - Christine Gary  
Secretary - Jim Bryant  
Treasurer - Richard Winn

### Directors:

Aaron Hake  
John Kane  
Doris Osko  
Mary Winn

### Directors Emeritus

Marla Benson  
Janette Neumann  
Ted Taylor



To contact us call  
**951.898.2044**  
*Please leave a message*



## Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization dedicated to preservation and revitalization of Corona's historic buildings, neighborhoods and sites.

Through education, legislation and organization, CHPS acts as an advocate for the preservation of Corona's historic resources.

## Monthly Meetings

CHPS Board meetings are held each month to transact Society business, discuss issues affecting the Society and preservation of local historic resources.

**All members are invited to attend.**

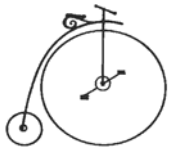
The next meetings will be

**Thursday, September 20, 6:30 at CHPS office**

**Thursday, October 18, 6:30 at CHPS office**



**Website: [www.coronahistory.org](http://www.coronahistory.org)**



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, California 92878-2904



**Corona Citrus Label Presentation**  
**Saturday, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>** See page 5 inside