

May - June 2017

## "Preserving the Best of Corona"

Editor: Mary Winn

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### A Message From Your President Wes Speake

Dear Members,

2017 is off to a quick start: our Panel Discussion of "Growing up Corona in the '70s" was a big hit and well attended; the CHPS hosted a booth at City Hall for Arbor Day; Rich Winn and I handed out over a 100 maps, time lines and other information that educated the public on Corona's rich history of not only being a tree city but having several historic districts where trees are prominently featured (South Main Street, Chase Drive, Rimpau Avenue.) Several CHPS members attended the Riverside County History Symposium in Hemet (story follows), fund raising for the Veterans Memorial Wall is off to a great start. The Grand Tour event planning is in full swing and we are looking forward to putting on a great tour on May 13th.

Mary Winn has been quite busy creating videos for the CHPS YouTube Channel. Watch for a future article in the *Newsletter*.

One of the greatest things about being involved in the CHPS is getting to read, talk and experience history. Being part of this dynamic group has lead me to explore my natural curiosity and interest in the history of what's around me every day. Recently, I was invited by our great Advisor (secret agent) Tom Richins to hunt for the original alignment of the Sante Fe Railway that ran from Corona to San Diego. 16.46 Miles of track were abandoned in February 1934. Tom was researching for an article he has since written for his "History of Corona" Facebook Page (it's a great read if you haven't seen it) as I was playing part-time navigator and look at the various maps I could pull up on my phone I kept seeing the name Weisel, it would pop up like El Cerrito or Pepper Corner. Pepper Corner was covered some years ago by Mary Winn in an article in the CHPS Newsletter.

Weisel was named after P.J. Weisel. The spot on the map above referred to Weisel's Ranch. The Ranch was originally called Craig Ranch. P.J. Weisel held dances at the ranch and the Ranch was used for the Boy Scouts first camporee called "Butterfield Camp."



Mr. Weisel was a Partner in Corona Silica Company until it was dissolved in November 1926. He formed the Weisel Silica Company and ran the company until 1947.

In 1947, Owens-Illinois Company leased the property from the Weisel family and built a full-scale silica extraction facility for glass production. Weisel Industrial Sand Company had a rail spur that went to the Corona-

Elsinore line. That facilitated the silica being loaded directly from deep pits onto trains. As sand was extracted and sent to the main plant it went on a conveyor belt, which ran above Temescal Canyon Road. Soon the Owens-Illinois silica plant sprawled on both sides of Temescal Canyon Road - then Highway 71 - and ran 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Water and gravity were employed to separate out the clay and other materials from the finest sand granules. From Corona, the clay was shipped to local brick makers. The sand, as white as fine sugar, was shipped to glassmakers throughout the Western United States where it was mixed with salt cake, soda, ash and limestone and then baked in a furnace at 2600 degrees. This mine produced some of the highest quality silica available.

Sincerely, WES



Courtesy Corona Public Library

# I Remember When... The Brooks Sisters By Richard & Mary Winn

## Rita Brooks Johnson and Darlene (DeeDee) Brooks Schelke

After the CHPS sponsored "Growing Up in Corona in the 1970s" panel discussion was screened live on Facebook, Rita Brooks Johnson contacted our newsletter editor, Mary, and commented that she would have liked to hear more about things and places that were not mentioned. Mary decided that Rita's unique perspective and comments would make a very interesting "I Remember When" article in the *CHPS Newsletter*. A few weeks later, Rita and her sister Darlene (DeeDee) Schelke were interviewed at Rita's home in Las Vegas, NV for this article. They are daughters of Jess and Vi Brooks, who owned and operated "American Cleaners," Corona's first drive-thru cleaners, located at 4th Street and Main and later at 3rd and Main. The Brooks family lived on the "downtown" premises of the cleaning business and had much to share about Corona's downtown and their years at Corona High School. They recalled growing up in a town full of old traditions and safety with no locked doors and no locked cars. They could remember, by name, all the storefront businesses, owned or operated by local residents (Mom & Pop stores) along Sixth and Main Streets and who operated them before Urban Renewal in the late 1960s - early 1970s.



Rita (CHS 1961) on left and  
DeeDee (CHS 1967) on right

### About their high school years they remembered:

- The "Senior Sanctuary" area where four benches with backs were for seniors only and presence there was enforced by Senior boys,
- Color coordinated angora sweaters and socks for girls, and similar colored angora yarn wrapped around a boyfriend's class ring on his finger,
- Drag races on South Main Street, with designated start and finish lines,
- Their dad, Jess Brooks, handcrafted and painted all cheerleader megaphones for many years,
- Going to drive in movies at the Magnolia, Rubidoux, and Van Buren drive-ins,
- The cost of a date would be less than \$5 for gas, movie tickets, and a hamburger and a coke for two,
- Everyone "cruised"
- Corona High School on West Sixth Street was a wonderful place to go to school.

### About their hometown, they fondly remembered:

- The beautiful dark wood trim in the Carnegie Library,
- A large mural on the lobby wall at the Springborg Hotel,
- Toby's Café which preceded the Hong Kong restaur-

rant at that site,

- The truckers coffee mug collection on the wall at the Wagon Wheel restaurant on West Sixth Street,
- The Circle Inn, a round restaurant located at E. Grand and E. Sixth Street, (Cupid's location) with juke boxes on the counters. Rita sang and danced on the counter at age 3.

- Mava Ice Cream parlor near Sixth & Main streets which also had juke boxes on the tables, like seen in *Happy Days*,

- Harris & Son department store sold

the first Barbie dolls in Corona,

- Tops Bar and its historic clock that originally hung on Corona's First National Bank and still hangs on the SKC Japanese restaurant on East Sixth Street,
- Segregation and discrimination existed in town but kids largely ignored it, with the exception of car clubs: there were "Mexican" car clubs and "white" car clubs,
- Sam Speers had a pawn shop near McMahons furniture store that had anything and everything, with items everywhere, including parts for machinery,
- Movies at the Corona Theater every Saturday were 50 cents,
- The Crystal Ball Roller Rink,
- Record clubs at two locations that would give a free 45 RPM record after purchasing 9 45 RPM records.



This tiara is from when Rita was selected Miss Hi-Jinx in 1961 at Corona High School.

To the right, Rita is seen displaying her sash from when she was named "Miss Football 1960-1961" in the Fall of 1960 at Corona High School.

## I Remember When... The Brooks Sisters Continued



Rita was awarded the game ball (on the left) showing the score and signed by CHS football players over 57 years ago in the Fall of 1960.

The score was Corona 46 and Bonita 19 the night she was announced "Miss Football 1960-1961."

The artifacts below are from Rita's collection. Her sash is on the left. Her "B" Cheerleader triangle collar and Varsity Cheerleading letter (featuring the panther) are seen on the lower right.

The highly deflated leather football is seen at the top of the photo.

**They thought of their parents as responsible and civic-minded citizens who:**

- Cleaned and repaired high school band uniforms at no cost to the school or band members,
- Cleaned all the American Legion flags that were placed at the curb throughout the community,
- Took formal dresses left at the cleaners to Mrs. Arnold at the high school who would see that students who couldn't afford a formal, would have one,
- Mom (Vi) was an accomplished seamstress and did all alterations for Emerson's Men's Clothing Store and most other retail clothing stores in town,
- Father Jess made uniquely styled canes for just about everybody and was known as "The Cane Man." When he passed on, his obituary read, "The cane man walks no more",
- Provided a unique service for the community: Jess rigged his 1936 Ford panel truck with a public address system for public events. It was used for most every event. Rita would drive home from school, pick up the panel truck and drive it back to school to be used for announcing track and field events.

**Note:** In later years, DeeDee and her husband purchased and operated the cleaners, keeping it in the family.



## National Register of Historic Places Update

We are pleased to report that the nomination of Thomas Jefferson Elementary School to the National Register of Historic Places has been received at the State level by the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) which is within the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The nomination application is currently being reviewed by a State Historian. We look forward to hearing that this item will appear on the agenda for the California Historic Resources Commission within the next few weeks. We are pleased to acknowledge the detailed research, write-up, and photographs provided by our history consultant, Jennifer Mermilliod, to move this nomination forward.

Richard and Mary Winn have been instrumental in the success of two previous nominations to the National Register:

- 1) Corona's Second High School buildings and Historic Civic Center, located at 815 West Sixth Street
- 2) Historic District encompassed by the Grand Boulevard circular roadway

# Report on 2017 Riverside County History Symposium By Wes Speake

On March 4, 2017 this year's history symposium took place at the Historic Hemet Theatre. The event was hosted by Steve Lech of the Riverside County Heritage Association. CHPS was a Bronze level sponsor. CHPS Members in attendance were: Wes Speake, Tom and Paula Muñoz and Michele Wentworth.

The symposium consisted of four great talks about Riverside county. "Frank A. Miller – Beliefs, Culture, and Peace", "Luther Menifee Wilson and the Menifee Mining District", "Arabian Nights in the American Desert – The Cultivation of Middle Eastern Fantasies in California's Coachella Valley" and "The Wicked and the Rowdy of Riverside County".

## The Site:

The Hemet Theater was built in 1921 and is currently being used for a concert hall and movies. It was remodeled in the 1940's and again in the 1960's. Further restoration is planned. Original 1940's style seating is still evident and comfortable. Seats are divided with white head rests indicating premium seating. The Historic Hemet Theatre Foundation currently operates the theater on a long term lease.

## The Talks:

Long-time docent at the Mission Inn, Jerry Gordon, gave a talk entitled "Frank A. Miller – Beliefs, Culture, and Peace". His talk focused on the founder of the Mission Inn's support of individual religious beliefs (many religions) even though he didn't attend church regularly. He helped build the Congregational Church and several others in Riverside. Friends of the Millers built a stone tower and bridge in the Miller's name on Mt. Rubidoux, in 1925, while the Millers were traveling abroad.

Miller was influential in locating in Riverside the U.S. government's Indian school called the Sherman Institute. Construction of nine mission type buildings began in July 1901. Sadly, they have all been subsequently demolished. Miller opened a 23-acre Railway Park—later named Chemawa—with a polo field and race track. "The park not only added to the city's beauty and pleasure but increased the revenues of the streetcar line managed by Miller."

Mr. Miller befriended Jukichi Harada and his family in a time when those of Asian decent were not welcome in Riverside. Mr. Harada bought a house in December 1915 and recorded the title in the name of his first three children born in the US (California law in the early 1900s prohibited the Japanese from owning property; Mr. Harada, his wife and eldest son were born in Japan.) People who disliked the Japanese, others who were unhappy that the Haradas had bought the house or thought it was unlawful for them to own it filed suit in California Supreme Court. "Frank Miller was very helpful to the Harada family during this time. ... In 1918 the California Supreme Court ruled that the Harada children could own the house because they were American citizens." In 1948 California and the US Supreme Court threw out the law prohibiting Japanese from owning property. The Harada house became famous throughout the US; today it is a Riverside Cultural Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historical Places.

"The cause of world peace was associated with both the Inn and the

local mountain Miller staged a peace conference in Riverside in 1911 with the help of the Andrew Carnegie Peace Foundation and a number of prominent men .... In 1919, a year after the end of WWI, he associated the peace theme with Mt. Rubidoux by starting an annual Armistice Day ... sunset service."

Bob Kent addressed: "Luther Menifee Wilson and the Menifee Mining District" Luther Menifee Wilson was a miner who wasn't very successful at mining; however, he was successful in producing children and marrying underage women! Many Wilsons claim him as their great-grandfather and he had two – possibly three – wives and eight children.

He is recognized as the guide who showed Helen Hunt Jackson around when she was gathering information about the local tribes for her story "Ramona." Wilson was successful in finding paying mines all over valley, but low quality ore and his proclivity for hard liquor kept him broke. He died in 1899 of alcoholism.

Dr. Sarah Seekatz wove an amazing tale of the origins and evolution of the Middle Eastern influences on the Coachella Valley in the early 1900's. The renaming of Walters, CA to Mecca, CA, how dates became a staple crop in the Coachella Valley and how Middle Eastern Fantasies of 1001 Arabian nights came to be used as a marketing ploy, were clearly explained in an entertaining manner.

"Agricultural explorers," a breed of government scientists who sought new crops from around the world, were sent to Algeria, Iraq, and Egypt at the turn of the 20th century. These explorers brought back date offshoots, planting these young palms in experimental stations throughout the desert Southwest, including in Tempe, Arizona and the Coachella Valley. To capitalize on this Middle Eastern idea, Harem Girls, Camel Races, and the International Date Festival were begun.

Dr. Seekatz' Lecture can be seen at <http://www.calchannel.com/test/> and <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/harem-girls-and-camel-races-middle-eastern-fantasies-in-the-deserts-of-southern>

Local historian, Kim Jarrell Johnson informed us about numerous local personalities alleged to be wicked and rowdy. I don't remember any of the people, just thought that it wasn't that wicked or rowdy!

**The Tour:** The day finished with a tour of the Hemet Museum. The museum is located in the freight house portion of the train depot that was built in 1898 and is one of the oldest structures at Florida Avenue and State Street

The nonprofit Hemet Heritage Foundation operates the museum, which is entirely staffed by volunteers. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

I would highly recommend a visit to lovely downtown Hemet.



A turn-of-the-century dental office is featured among the museum displays

**TICKETS ARE VERY LIMITED SO PICK YOURS UP RIGHT AWAY OR ORDER THEM ONLINE!**

# THE **GRAND TOUR**

## A CURBSIDE VIEW OF THE HISTORY, HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE CIRCLE CITY

PRESENTED BY CORONA HISTORIC PRESERVATION SOCIETY



SATURDAY MAY 13TH  
BUS TOUR BEGINS AT  
CORONA HERITAGE PARK  
510 W. FOOTHILL PKWY

TOURS TIMES: 10:00AM, 11:15AM  
LAST TOUR 12:30PM

TICKETS PRE-SALE \$15  
DAY OF EVENT \$20

Limited number of tickets available • Limited space per tour, make sure you select a tour time for online orders

TICKETS ARE FOR SALE AT THE  
CORONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND HERITAGE PARK  
(CASH OR CHECK) STARTING 4/13  
OR

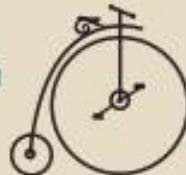
[HTTP://WWW.CORONA-HISTORY.ORG/](http://WWW.CORONA-HISTORY.ORG/)  
(CREDIT CARDS)

Online ticket sales end at 10pm on Fri 5/12



Email [CHPSInfo@yahoo.com](mailto:CHPSInfo@yahoo.com)

P (951) 898-2044



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Antiques & Collectibles Faire

CHPS will once again sponsor two booths at the upcoming Faire. Please be sure to stop by and have an ice cold glass or two of our fresh lemonade made with Corona-grown lemons.

Our nearby second booth will offer information about the Society as well as offer architectural salvage items or materials. Included in the inventory are vintage windows, shutters, doors, cabinets, molding and hardware.



**Q - U - A - L - I - T - Y  
ANTIQUES ONLY  
No Garage Sale Rubbish**

- Railroad Club Model Layout Displays

- Fine Art Gallery Arts Show & Sale

- Heritage Gardens Plant Show & Sale

- BBQ Tri-Tip & Pastrami, Kettle Corn & Lemonade

- CORONA HERITAGE PARK & MUSEUM 510 W. Foothill Corona, Calif.

- Info: Shellie Norland (951) 302-0080 [www.coronaheritage.org](http://www.coronaheritage.org)



## As Always - Free Admission and Parking

SPONSORED BY: HEMBORG FORD • PACIFIC WESTERN BANK • MIDPOINT BEARING • GPA DOORS & WINDOWS • BLUE BANNER PACKING CO. ALLSTAR COLLISION • NORLAND ENTERPRISES • SIX-PAC RECYCLING • PROMOTIONAL SPORTSWEAR • THE EVENT CENTER • CITY OF CORONA

## VIP Reception at Norco College



On March 20, members of the Corona Historic Preservation Society Board of Directors were pleased to be invited and able to attend a VIP Reception held in the Art Gallery at Norco College (NC). Also among the attendees were community and business leaders from surrounding local cities. We enjoyed a de-

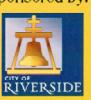
licious dinner and an evening of meeting, greeting, socializing, and networking with members of the faculty and local important persons.

This reception was held to help those attending become better acquainted with the college and what it offers to our communities as well as introducing Dr. Bryan Reece, new president of NC, who brings over 26 years of rich community college teaching expertise and a range of administrative involvement to the job, to the community. He comes to Norco College from Crafton Hills College where he served as vice president of instruction.

Dr. Reece provided extensive information on the various Norco College programs in order to make community leaders aware of the numerous successful degree and certificate studies that enrich the community and prepare students for their futures. He pointed out that Norco College is known for state-of-the art technology, engineering automation, multimedia, and video game development programs.

## Save the Date For This Event

**Old Riverside Foundation's  
Vintage Home Tour 2017**  
Restoration Faire & Vintage Mercantile

**Sponsored by:** 

**Henry L.A. Jekel & the  
Spanish Colonial Revival Craze**

**Saturday May 20th, 10:00 - 4:00**

Tickets: \$20 pre-sale, \$22 day of tour. Available after April 5th

Tickets available online at [www.oldriverside.org](http://www.oldriverside.org), by mail or at the vendors below:

MRS. TIGGY WINKLES  
3675 Main Street

A to Z PRINTING  
4330 VanBuren Blvd.

DO-IT CENTER  
7550 Jurupa Avenue

MISSION GALLERIA  
3700 Main Street

MO. VALLEY FLOWER BOX  
14340 Elsworth St #B

COURTYARD MARRIOTT  
1510 University Avenue

FOR MORE INFO. CONTACT: Nancy Parrish (951)509-7682 or [Factsgirl@aol.com](mailto:Factsgirl@aol.com)  
Visit us at [www.oldriverside.org](http://www.oldriverside.org) / Facebook @ Old Riverside Foundation

# Membership Information \*

When joining or renewing your membership, please make your  
tax deductible check payable to "CHPS"

Individual Member	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00
Student	\$10.00
Business	\$50.00
Patron	\$100.00
Life	\$500.00

<input type="checkbox"/>

I'd like to volunteer!
Hospitality refreshments
Newsletter writing articles
Vintage Home Tour
docent / volunteer
Board of Directors

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



Membership Status: Renewal  New

Please complete form and mail to:

CHPS  
P.O. Box 2904  
Corona, CA 92878



## We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

George & Ruth Beloz  
Tacy Benziek  
Christa Bergreen  
Heather Watson Bolle  
Richard & Mary Jo Boller  
Lee Hansen  
Patricia Hicks  
Marjorie Keith

Patty Knoeckel  
Randy & Cathy Leonti  
Kent & Ginnette Lillibridge  
Armando Marquez  
Debbie McCormick  
Jerry & Jean Neumann  
Jim Pauly  
McManaway Interior Design

Nathan & Roberta Reed  
Darlene Brooks Schelke  
Gretchen Scoggins  
Tom & MaryAnn Sherman  
Dean Stamp  
Peggy Temple  
Donna Vermette  
Harold & Beryl Williams

## \* Donating, Renewing or Joining CHPS Online

The following explanation has been added to the CHPS website home page to explain how to join or renew your membership in the Society electronically using PayPal or in the traditional manner with a hard copy application (located at the top of this page) that is printed, filled out and then mailed to the CHPS P.O. box.

### HOW TO JOIN OR DONATE:

To join electronically, you may use the PayPal "Add to Cart" **PayPal** button at the top of the CHPS home page or you may obtain a membership application from the website or from any issue of the bi-monthly *CHPS Newsletter*.

The completed application, or donation in any amount, may be mailed in with a check, in the correct amount for the desired category of Membership, to:

Corona Historic Preservation Society  
P. O. Box 2904  
Corona, CA 92878

To donate electronically please use the "Donate" **PayPal** button at the top or bottom of this page. If the donation is to be directed to a special project or activity (historic markers, road signs, Veteran's Memorial Wall, etc.), please describe the activity or project in the "Message" block.



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

## Board of Directors

President - Wes Speake  
Vice President - Eric Bergreen  
Secretary - Doris Osko  
Treasurer - Richard Winn

### Directors

Trisha Henson-Cabrera  
Paula Muñoz  
Mary Winn

### Advisors

Marla Benson  
Tom Richins  
Ted Taylor



To contact us call  
**951.898.2044**



Please leave a brief  
message

## Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is a nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the PRESERVATION, PROTECTION and PERPETUATION of Corona's historic sites, buildings, neighborhoods and resources. We do this through education, community events, preservation projects and tireless advocacy for the benefit of present and future generations.

## 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 Board meetings will be:

**Thursday, May 18, 6:30 P.M. at CHPS office**

**Thursday, June 15, 6:30 P.M. at CHPS Office**



**Visit our Website at [www.Corona-History.org](http://www.Corona-History.org)**



Corona  
Historic  
Preservation  
Society

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



**Don't miss "The Grand Tour"**  
**On May 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**See page 5 for details**

