

September - October 2011

"Preserving the Best of Corona"

A Message From Our President Christine Gary

Dear Members,

If you have not already read your e-mail or the article in the *Press-Enterprise*, the Corona Historic Preservation Society has a fantastic announcement. After many years of research and hard work mainly by Richard and Mary Winn, Corona's Grand Boulevard Historic District has now been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We are all very excited about this accomplishment. You can learn about the details inside this newsletter.

In July, one of our Quarterly Meetings was held at the Community Room of the Historic Civic Center. Richard and Mary Winn presented

many interesting photos through a slide show presentation showing images from the past and present. Although we prepared by setting up 40 chairs, 120 actually attended. There was standing room only in the room all of whom enjoyed the terrific presentation and complimentary refreshments provided by Jackie and Bubba Bland.

Our next Quarterly Meeting will be on Saturday, September 17th, again at the same location. We are



CHPS Board President Christine Gary officially signs over ownership of the Hotel Del Rey to the Corona Heritage Foundation. President Marla Benson accepts on behalf of the Foundation. CHPS Vice President Mary Winn and CHF Treasurer Ted Taylor witnessed the transfer on August 16, 2011.

honored to have Kevin Bash come and show many important vintage images as a slide show, and talk to us about his recently released book *The Navy in Norco*. We history lovers, and all community members, should really enjoy and learn much about our region's involvement with the Navy during World War II and since then. We hope you will plan to attend.

Don Williamson has been hard at work researching and preparing for the 2013 Centennial Celebration of the First Corona Road Race which took place on September 9, 1913. Don is the Chairman of this event and would appreciate any photos or information relating to the Corona Road Races. It will be even more mean-

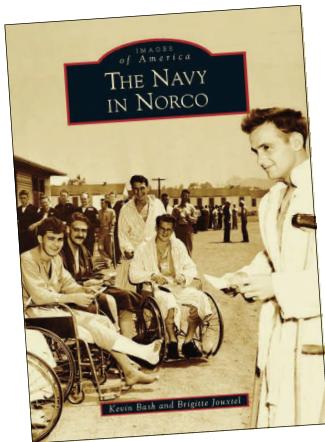
ful to recognize Grand Boulevard on the National Register of Historic Places at the Corona Road Race Celebration in 2013. If you would like to get involved in the preparations for this event, please call Don at 951.529.2999.

Have a safe and healthy next few months!

Christine Gary



Quarterly Meeting: "The Navy in Norco"

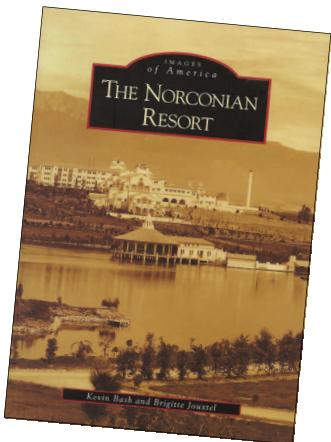


A FREE slideshow presentation and book signing event by author Kevin Bash is just around the corner!

When: Saturday, Sept. 17 at 10:00 a.m.

Where: Community Room
of Historic Civic Center
815 West 6th Street, Corona

Both of Kevin's books will be available for purchase and signing



Corona - Then & Now

CHPS QUARTERLY MEETING, JULY 16, 2011 By Doris Osko

There was standing room only in the Community Room of the Historic Civic Center as Mary and Richard Winn presented 230 slides, and regaled their audience of 120 with stories surrounding the pictures viewed.

This room was originally the library when Corona High students attended school from 1923-1960. The former library became the City Manager's office when the campus served as Corona's Civic Center from 1962– March 2005.

As each slide appeared on the screen under the heading of "Then" and "Now" there were audible comments from those watching concerning the contrast between the two images. Sometimes it was a moan as listeners saw the empty grassy field where the Carnegie Library once stood; sometimes the sound was an "Aaah!" as the audience viewed the slide of the Jacob Stoner home (now owned by the Glenn Chaffins) which has been maintained and restored to its original loveliness.

Mary concentrated on residences, schools, churches and street scenes, past and present. Richard took over the second half with the topic of "Commerce." The Winns are two of the founding members of the Corona Historic Preservation Society. Mary, as the author of two books on Corona's History, and Richard, as the Society's first Vice President, had a wealth of information to provide.

There was no doubt that many in the audience have a keen interest in Corona's history. Historical



author and Mayor Pro Tem of Corona's sister city, Norco, Kevin Bash, was there. Author Steve Lech and journalist Nita Hiltner were also in attendance. Nita Hiltner later posted this comment on the CHPS web site: "I really think our junior and senior high school students need to see a program like this." Corona City Council members, Eugene

Montanez, Karen Spiegel, and Jason Scott have all shown an interest in historic preservation in the past and were there to support and learn from the Winns' presentation.

A special surprise at the close of the presentation was a short fictional Hollywood film from September, 1913 which contained road races on Grand Boulevard with cars being driven by the famous Teddy Tetzlaff, Barney Oldfield and the winner, Earl Cooper, as well as the antics of comedian Fatty Arbuckle. These same drivers had raced around Corona's Grand Boulevard, now on the California Register of Historic Places, sending up billows of dust.



Attendees at the end of meeting: Originally set up for an audience of 40, CHPS planners of the meeting were thrilled to see the crowd grow to 120 by time the Winns' slide show commenced.

Don Williamson, who is Chairman for the Centennial Celebration of the Corona Road Races in 2013, posted on Facebook this comment on the *Corona—Then and Now* presentation: "Richard and Mary, Thank you very much for the fabulous presentation today. Your hard work, attention

to detail, and accuracy is appreciated. You have done so much to preserve Corona's past and have become community heroes. Thank you again."

Many echoed Don's sentiments.

Then & Now: Corona Book is Underway By Mary Winn

The idea for the slide show presentation, comparing past images with the photos from the present day, evolved over time as a result of the Society's Board of Directors discussion of ideas for our Quarterly Meetings. Since early 2011, my husband Richard and I have thoroughly enjoyed identifying significant locations throughout the area and snapping current photos with our trusted Sony Cybershot. Jackie Bland, Quarterly Meeting Coordinator, went ahead and scheduled a date for the July meeting hoping that other Coronans would be interested in the photos we had to share.

On Saturday morning, July 16, 2011, we were overwhelmed at the attendance and enthusiasm of those who decided to join us! Because of the many interested attendees, their positive reception and enthusiasm for the project, I was convinced that it was time to incorporate THEN & NOW photos into another book to be published by Arcadia Publishing in their *Then & Now* series.

In order to do justice to this topic, I need to locate more photos from Corona's past.

Do you have photos of "Old Corona"?

If so, please share your photos or slides with me
for possible inclusion in the book.

Please call me ASAP at 951.371.5291
so we can meet the publisher's deadline.

Your images will be professionally scanned
and promptly returned to you.

If they are included in the book, proper credit will be given to you.

**All proceeds from book sales go directly to the
Corona Historic Preservation Society.**



Grand Boulevard Historic District Named to the National Register of Historic Places

By Richard Winn

Recently, Corona added another historic site to the National Register of Historic Places.

This designation occurred July 14, 2011 and followed the May 19, 2011 action of the California Historic Resources Commission making Corona's unique circular roadway a California Historic Landmark.

The one-mile diameter circular roadway along with its streetscape consisting of curbs, sidewalks, pocket parks, vintage street lamps and parkway trees, is now nationally recognized. Local recognition occurred on May 16, 2001 when the boulevard was designated by the City of Corona as an Historic District on the Corona Register of Historic Resources.

On June 6, 1886, civil engineer H. Clay Kellogg drove a stake into the ground marking the center point of the Grand Boulevard Circle. This was done at the behest of R. B. Taylor, one of the city's five founding fathers. It took only three days to complete the layout of the boulevard with stakes placed every twenty feet around the perimeter. R.B. Taylor suggested the circle street would make the city unique. He also envisioned and wrote about having horse races someday on Grand Boulevard. Little did Taylor know in 1886, that it would be race cars rather than horses speeding around the circle some 27 years later starting in 1913, that put Corona on the map.

World-class Corona Road Races, second only to the races begun at Indianapolis in 1911, were held almost a century ago in 1913, 1914 and 1916. Special trains from as far away as San Francisco brought racing enthusiasts to Corona to witness the competition along the circular roadway. Thousands of motorists arrived early and spent the wee hours of race day huddled near campfires on roads leading to Corona's course. Within three hours of the completion of the first race some 15,000 motor vehicles were observed leaving the area heading for home.

During World War II, the circular roadway was determined to be a possible navigation aid to Japanese aircraft attacking the west coast so coast watcher towers were built on several local vantage points. These were



staffed by volunteers with binoculars and aircraft recognition handbooks. Fortunately, no attacks occurred, but we were prepared.

Mary and Richard Winn began working on the nomination of Grand Boulevard at the request of the Corona Historic Preservation Society. In late 2005, the Society had made it one of their goals to place the city's

unique circular roadway on the National Register and when the Winns reported that they lacked the technical expertise to persuade the State Office of Historic Preservation of the merits of this nomination, the Society leadership retained the services of Architectural Historian Jennifer Mermilliod of JM Research and Consulting, who had successfully represented the nomination of Victoria Avenue in Riverside, to work with the Winns and prepare the appropriate documentation.

The National Register of Historic Places is maintained by the U. S. Department of the Interior and only the sites, structures and districts most meritorious of continued preservation are so listed

Other Corona sites included on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places, that can be viewed are the Woman's Improvement Club (1988) and Corona High School (2005), now known as the Historic Civic Center. Corona's Carnegie Library was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 but was demolished in 1978 to make way for a Pioneer Chicken restaurant, which was never built. It was the threatened demolition of the Carnegie Library that gave rise to the historic preservation movement in Corona. Regretfully, the site remains an empty weed lot to this day, some 33 years later.



The Winns are seen here at Santa Monica City Hall where the California Historic Resources Commission met and voted on California Landmark status of Grand Boulevard Historic District. The application was then advanced on to be considered for National Register designation.

I Remember When... Mike Figeira

By Don Williamson

At Corona High School, June 2011 passed without an acknowledgement, however the month marked the 50th anniversary since the first class graduated from the "new" school now in its sixth decade on the corner of Tenth Street & Lincoln. To date, this location has been Corona High School 18 years longer than its predecessor, the campus at 815 W. Sixth Street.

We asked CHS 1961 Class President Mike Figeira to describe the excitement that one might think would be present among the 270 members of that inaugural class. A current Corona resident, Mike has lived all over the country since first moving here as a youngster in 1950. His descriptions about the Class of 1961 were a bit surprising:

- The students considered the school on Sixth Street to be their home. Mike said, "Nobody wanted to move especially the seniors. We begged the administration to let us stay and finish our senior year."
- He pointed out, "We would drive by the construction zone all the time and hoped it wouldn't be finished in time for us," Construction was, in fact, behind schedule and the Tenth Street buildings could not be occupied until the second semester that began in January 1961.
- On Sixth Street the students were free to have lunch at nearby off campus eateries such as the Hi Spot and Chums. On Tenth Street the campus was "closed" at first. "We were stuck with the cafeteria," lamented Mike, "but they opened campus after about a month."
- All outdoor sports were played on the Sixth Street fields since the venues were not ready at the new campus on Lincoln. (Records show the football team record that year was 0-8) Since the bleachers were not completed on Tenth the graduation ceremony was also held at the "old" campus.

Summing up the attitude of the Corona High Class of 1961 on their new school Mike concluded, "We hated the new building from day one."

When the subject turned to what it was like growing up in the Circle City in the late fifties/early sixties, Mike's recollections brightened. He recalled:



• "Corona was a great place to be. We had the bowling alley with its coffee shop, the Mava and movies."

• "You had to have a nice car. We would have cruise nights on Magnolia Avenue with five or six stops between Corona and Riverside or sometimes Claremont." It was a lot like what you saw in American Graffiti." We had the Rubidoux Drive In, the Fox Theater, and the Arlington. A lot of cruisin' and going to the movies."

"Back then girls would have curfews. After dropping off your dates you would meet the guys at the bowling alley and make plans for the rest of the night. On Main Street from Chase down we had quarter mile strips marked (for racing).

Mike said you didn't get bored and it was a lot of fun. Mike has been married to his high school sweetheart, Christy (Ammerman) Figeira, CHS 1963, for 47 years and they have two daughters. Mike served his county in the U.S. Navy and is a Vietnam War Veteran.

Summarizing his Corona High School experience from 50 years ago Mike said, "High school was the best time of life, no responsibilities, cars, girls and friends."

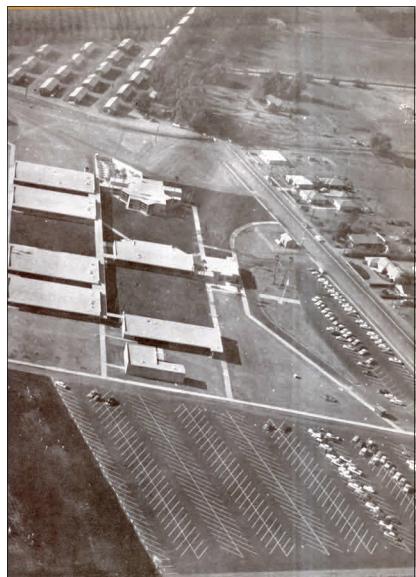
It sounds like it was a good time to have been a Corona High Panther.

This aerial view is looking west at Corona High campus on 10th Street.

It first opened its doors to students in January 1961.

It looks like 10th Street ended at the Oak St. flood channel.

Photo source:
The 1961
Coronal yearbook



Society Members Riding in Style



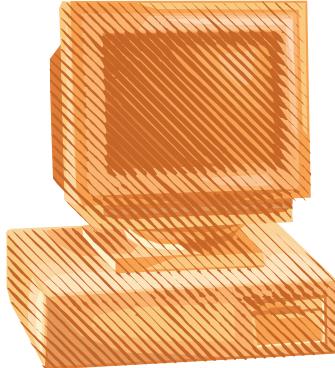
Coronans have always loved a parade. We also like tradition so it was fitting that a few of us cruised in style in the Main Street U.S.A. Parade, held every Independence Day right here in Corona. The high temps and searing sun continued as they have in previous years. But the celebratory spirit of patriotism overcame any discomfort as four of our members enjoyed a smooth ride along the parade route in a 1937 Packard convertible owned by Packard enthusiast and CHPS member Glenn Johnson.

Riding in style were Board Members Don Williamson, Tom and Paula Muñoz, and their “chauffeur” CHPS member Gary Osko.

Corona Heritage Online Update By Jennifer Marlatt

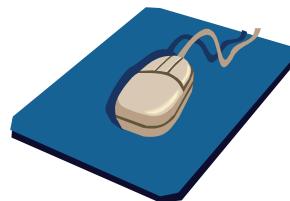
On August 15th, the Library debuted its new library catalog & local history database, **Corona Heritage Online**. With this update users are now able to search the library's circulating collection and the local history collection in one click. When using the library catalog you can focus your search on the local history collection which includes digital photographs, finding aids and artifacts by selecting “Asset Search” from the dropdown menu below the search box or you can go directly to Corona Heritage Online <http://coro.sdp.sirsi.net/client/coronaheritageonline> to browse & search the local history collection.

This update to Corona Heritage Online retained its list of browseable collections such as artifacts, blueprints and photographs. Also by using the dropdown menu below the search box you can narrow your search to the blueprints, road race images, citrus labels or the Corona Daily Independent (CDI) Photo Collection. Corona Heritage Online contains over 6,000 images including some of our earliest images from the 1800s as well as images of the recent past (Santa Ana River flooding in 2010). With the release of the new Corona Heritage Online we are debuting a new photograph collection, the Corona Daily Independent



(CDI) Photograph Collection. There are over 3,000 images taken by CDI staff from the 1960s & 1970s in the collection. Most of the images include the captions that the Independent published to describe the photograph. As the images are scanned they are added to the online collection. Currently there are 222 images from the CDI Collection available online. In addition to the CDI Collection, we are in the process of scanning a collection of Jameson & Todd Family photographs, as well as our early city directories; all of which will be added to Corona Heritage Online and will be completely searchable.

Alas, our entire collection is not available online, but we are adding to Corona Heritage Online everyday so check back frequently to see what has been added & visit the Heritage Room to see our complete collection of photographs, books and manuscripts.



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
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Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

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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

Mark German
Katherine Hyett
Randy & Cathy Leonti
Art & Therese Marquez
Janette Neumann
William A. Pope

John Quinn
Randy & Suzanne Rawson
Dottie Reichard
Roberta Stambaugh
Marcelle Turk

Architectural Salvage Shoppe

CHPS has limited amounts of architectural salvage items or materials available to those of you who are restoring your vintage homes. Included in the inventory are windows, shutters, doors, cabinets, molding and hardware.



If you need such items, call CHPS at 898-2044
and leave a brief message (<1 minute) along
with your telephone number.





Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

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Janette Neumann
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 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:

Wednesday, September 21, 7:00 pm at CHPS office

Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 pm at CHPS office



Visit us @ www.corona-history.org



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



The Grand Boulevard Historic District



was recently added to the
National Register of Historic Places

**Don't miss the opportunity to see the slide show
"The Navy in Norco" See page 1**