



November - December 2011

"Preserving the Best of Corona"

Editor: Mary Winn E-mail: Toothladytwo@aol.com

A Message From Our President Christine Gary

Dear Members,

This is the last newsletter of the year. A review of all the great projects and events we have worked on have resulted in an outstanding year.

Our Quarterly Meetings were very interesting and well-attended. The Vintage Home Tour worked out beautifully with many devoted volunteer docents and lots of happy people touring and learning about the beautiful historic homes and how people lived in the past.

We visited the Oval Office at Quality West Wing and Uncle Bud's Museum viewing the vintage automobiles on display. We sold antiques, architectural salvage and lemonade at the annual "start of summer" event, the Antiques & Collectibles Faire at Heritage Park. Several CHPS Board members rode in Glenn Johnson's 1937 Packard in the 4th of July Main Street USA Parade to lots of hoots and applause. We were successful in having Grand Boulevard Historic District named to the National Register of Historic Places. We arranged all parties to get together to transfer title of the Hotel Del Rey to the Corona Heritage Foundation.

Mary and Richard Winn presented a "Corona: Then & Now" slide show in July sharing contrasting photos from Corona's past with those of the present. Kevin Bash shared his slide show in September introducing his new book *The Navy In Norco*. He described the contributions of the Naval Hospital to our nation's wounded warriors and the Naval Weapons Station to our nation's defense efforts. Also covered were weapons procurement and quality control efforts. Kevin provided attendees with many stories about earlier times in Norco and Corona.

Since then, the Winns and Director Don Williamson, have spent many hours verifying facts, identifying photographs and doing historical research. Their efforts will assist Mary in her writing of a third book entitled *Then & Now: Corona* and will help Don as he gathers information and photographs for the centennial celebration of



The monitor as it appeared when Grand Boulevard Historic District was approved as a California Landmark by the California Historic Resources Commission on May 19, 2011 at City Council Chambers of Santa Monica City Hall. From there, our application went on to the federal level. On July 14, 2011, Grand Boulevard Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Corona's Road Races.

Mary has been presenting slide shows to community groups sharing images from the past and present. CHPS continues to sell Mary's first two pictorial books on Corona history and appreciates the expanded opportunities the proceeds from their sales have contributed to CHPS activities. Don Williamson has been networking with others as chairman of our Corona Road Race Centennial Celebration Committee, preparing for this upcoming event in 2013. Please contact Don at 951.529.2999 with any ideas you might have for suggested activities to include in the celebration, or if

you'd like to be involved.

We continue to look for homes to showcase on our 2012 Vintage Home Tour. If you own or know of someone who owns a home more than 50 years old that retains its original features and architectural integrity, please let us know. You all know what great fun we have at our Vintage Home Tours.

John Wiles has resumed managing the Dictionary Project for third graders in Corona-Norco schools. He and CHPS members will be giving out dictionaries to each third-grader at Lincoln Alternative School before the end of the school year.

It is time to get prepared for the Annual Meeting and Holiday Party on Thursday, December 8 to be held again at the historic Woman's Improvement Club, on Main Street. We will be holding the annual election for CHPS Board members during the meeting and, of course, there will be great food and drink. The Corona High School Madrigal Choir has confirmed that they will be present to sing for us once again. They are truly wonderful and are happy to help us get in the holiday spirit. I hope to see you all there. A list of pot luck salads, entrees and desserts, assigned by last name, is found on page 3 of this newsletter.

Best wishes during the holidays!

Christine Gary



Quarterly Meeting: *The Navy in Norco*

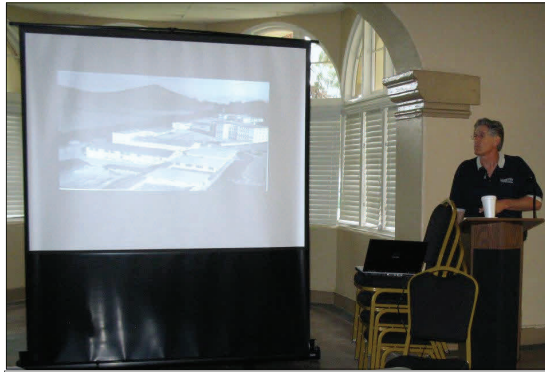
Featuring Author Kevin Bash By Doris Osko

President Christine Gary introduced speaker Kevin Bash as “the most knowledgeable person on the planet about the Norconian.”

Norco, of course, is the site of the lavish resort known as the Lake Norconian Club created by Norco’s founder, Rex Clark. It closed in mid-1940 and in 1941 the U.S Navy purchased it from Clark and opened the US Naval Hospital, a state-of-the art medical facility, on the same grounds.

The occasion of Kevin Bash’s speech was the CHPS Quarterly “bash” at the Historic Civic Center Community Room on Saturday, September 17, 2011 at 10:00 A.M. Kevin, Norco’s Mayor Pro Tem, author, and actor, presented a slide show based on his new book, *The Navy in Norco*. Once again Kevin lived up to his reputation. He is both witty and knowledgeable. He was able to show how the Naval base in Norco had an immediate and lasting effect on both Norco and Corona. Kevin made the audience aware of the many “firsts” that are associated with the two cities: 1) Walter Knott’s first berry field was started in Norco where the present Norco High School is located. 2) The Baseball Hall of Fame attributes Corona as the first city to put lights on a baseball field. 3) The Lake Norconian Club had the first all-grass golf course in Riverside County. 4) the U.S. Olympic Swimming and Diving Team broke records in the pool at the Norconian. Tandem diving, begun there, became “synchronized diving,” an Olympic event. 5) This Naval hospital was one of the first places heroin addicts were sent to be rehabilitated. 6) It was the founding site for one of the first wheelchair basketball teams. 7) The warfare center designed, created and tested classified Navy tactical munitions including guided missiles. At the Naval Weapons Center, pioneering advances were made in the development of guidance and telemetry systems, computer components, infrared spectroscopy, and other technical areas.

The hospital first treated survivors of the Pearl Harbor



Kevin Bash sharing details of the slide of the Naval Hospital appearing on the screen.

bombing, and it ultimately had special wings for patients with rheumatic fever, polio, venereal disease and tuberculosis. In the audience at the Historic Civic Center was a former patient of the Naval Hospital, Antonio Villareal Miranda, who was discharged at age 19 on October 22, 1945 after being treated for rheumatic fever. He had many memories of the Naval Hospital.

During the many years that the Norconian existed as a resort and later as a naval hospital, the number of celebrities who visited there is immense—too numerous to enumerate, but here are a few: Eleanor Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Jeannette MacDonald, Spike Jones, Hopalong Cassidy, Humphrey Bogart, and Bette Davis.



Antonio Villareal Miranda

Kevin graciously autographed his recent book, as well as his past book on the Norconian, both co-written with his wife Brigitte Jouxte. His recent book states “Norco very likely exists because of the financial boon provided by the U.S. Navy for over sixty years.” Presently occupying the Norconian and the naval hospital buildings is the California Rehabilitation

Center, the Naval Warfare Assessment Center Seal Beach, Detachment Norco, and the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Norco.

It is always an enlightening and entertaining experience when Kevin Bash is the guest presenter at a CHPS Quarterly Meeting.

Christine Gary assists Kevin with DVD and book sales after his slide show presentation held in the Community Room at the Historic Civic Center. The room once served as the high school library.





Our Traditional Holiday Party and Annual Meeting



Thursday
December 8
6:30 - 9:00 pm

**Annual Board
Member Election
will be held**



Woman's Improvement Club
1101 South Main Street

The club was founded in 1899. The clubhouse was built in 1913 and is based upon the design of a Welsh church.

This water color image is the work of the late Coty Porsley.

Corona High School's



Madrigal Choir



Potluck Dinner Food Assignments

Based on first letter of last name

A-H Salads / Vegetables
I-Q Desserts
R-Z Appetizers



Important!

If you plan to attend, please be sure
to call Doris at 737-1766 by December 2



Annual Election of Board of Directors

The election will take place at our Annual Holiday Party on December 8, 2011.

The Nomination Committee presents the following slate for your consideration:

Directors

Jackie Bland
Mark German
Doris Osko
Don Williamson
Richard Winn

Emeritus Directors

Marla Benson
Janette Neumann
Ted Taylor

Per CHPS Bylaws, the Director term is for two years; Emeritus Director term is for one year.

What do you think about a new Historic District?

By Richard Winn

A couple of months ago one of our newest members, Mark German, came to a Board of Directors meeting and suggested we do something about a remnant of an historic highway that lies within the Corona city limits.

SR 18 was originally built through Santa Ana Canyon between 1935 and 1938 as an extension of Santa Ana Canyon Road running from the intersection of Orange-Olive Avenue in Orange and the Riverside County line. In 1947, the road was given the additional designation of US 91 when that highway was extended south from its original terminus in Barstow. With the conversion of the four-lane expressway to the SR 91, on July 1, 1964, the US 91 and SR 18 designations were dropped. The previous four lane expressway is now covered by the SR 91 (Riverside Freeway). In several places along Santa Ana Canyon, curves and grading from the old road are still visible. However, on the western outskirts of Corona about one mile of the old highway still exists in much the same condition as it did 60 years ago.

This stretch of the old highway begins just east of the intersection of Green River Road with Palisades Road where Palisades Road parallels the Santa Fe railroad tracks. The top picture at the right shows the western end of the roadway where the historic raised median begins with its curb sidewalks containing recessed divots, or sockets, typical of the late 1930s era which used to contain reflective paint to help drivers see the lane divisions even when water was running across the roadway. Still remaining are some 370 feet of the all-wooden guardrail barricade, typical of this era, to prevent cars from running onto the railroad tracks. This can be seen in the second picture from the top.

All of the roadway between the barricade and the Wardlow Wash bridge at the eastern end, seen in the bottom picture, still retains the wide asphalt shoulders, socketed curb, elevated median, and asphalt surface typical of highways of the 1930s.

We hope to correct this oversight by obtaining Corona Public Works Department approval for a work project to repair and repaint the guardrail barricade, clean-up materials dumped on or adjacent to the highway, place appropriate historic signage at the beginning and end of this section of roadway, and

have it declared an Historic District by City Council Resolution.



I Remember... Frances Martinez

By Don Williamson

Frances Aldama Martinez started life amid tragedy: her mother passed away when she was giving birth to Frances in 1912. This catastrophe began a journey that would lead Frances to Corona where she became an important force for social growth and change. So much can be written about Frances. Her daughters Fran Tassin and Sylvia Martinez Barnett assisted in recalling their mother's life.

- Without a mother, Frances' aunt became responsible for the infant's care bringing

Frances to Corona to live in her adobe house on North Howard (torn down for the 91 freeway). Her aunt, a strict guardian, sent Frances to a Catholic convent school in downtown Los Angeles for an education. Sylvia says this is where Frances obtained a passion for music that lasted throughout her life and she became a talented singer and musician.

Frances returned to Corona after 8th grade and attended Corona High School, graduating in 1932. It was at Corona City Park that she met her future husband, George Martinez. When George came to call on Frances, he had to be prepared to dodge bricks and rocks that were aimed to greet him by Frances' protective family. To keep George in one piece, the couple eloped. George and Frances became parents of four children: Frances Tassin, George Jr., Buddy and Sylvia. Happily, of course, George became a beloved part of Frances' family.

Soon after their marriage, George and Frances lived in New Mexico, George's home state. It was here that Frances became politically aware. While living in Los Angeles she had witnessed and experienced discrimination that the "Mexican" (which was how any one of Hispanic heritage, despite citizenship, was referenced) population experienced. When she came home to Corona she was ready to participate in change.

- No matter the address, wherever a Hispanic child lived, they were enrolled at Washington Elementary. Frances realized the political power held by the Latino community, obtained her registrar credentials and started registering voters. Sylvia recalls her mother saying that if someone was reluctant to register she would tell them, "You better sign up or you can't complain." Frances' effort met with success. When her children were old enough to attend elementary school, they were able to attend Jefferson, the closest school to their home on Merrill.

- Following WWII, returning veterans were ready to become members of the American Legion. Frances worked with others in the community to establish the Joe Dominguez American Legion post. Sylvia relates, "She wrote postcards and even paid for the stamps to get the meetings started."

- Frances noted that whenever a Hispanic was accused of a crime the local newspaper always included that the person was a "Mexican." Sylvia tells us, "She went with Rudy Ramos (a local photographer) to the editor. My Mom told the editor that if you are



Ted Kennedy Frances Martinez John Tunney

going to print nationalities then you had better print everyone's, not just Mexicans'. The editor listened and the practice ceased.

- Frances regularly used her skills as an entertainer to organize countless fundraisers. Sylvia recalls one especially memorable event. "It was in the late fifties and my Mom convinced all the City Council members to dress in tutus and perform as ballerinas."

The money they raised that night bought new curtains for the auditorium at Corona High School.

- Sylvia remembers another fundraising effort. "Mom was fearless. She wanted Danny Thomas for an event, found out where he lived and went to his house to convince him to participate." This successful event benefited the Catholic Church building fund. Although she never ran for or held political office, Frances was more than influential and was sought out by politicians at every level of government. She brought Senator Ted Kennedy to an event in Corona in support of Congressman John Tunney. After the affair at the Armory, she wanted the two politicians to meet as many people as possible. Ever resourceful, she knew that Robert and Rosie Felix's wedding was in progress at St. Edward Church so she took Kennedy and Tunney there to shake a lot of hands.

Fran Tassin added these memories of her mother:

- "I recall when I was about junior high age and we lived in our old, small home, that Mom would have a houseful of people in the living room, stuffing envelopes for political purposes, making conversation, and all enjoying themselves tremendously.

- "My mom loved to be involved in many subjects. She used to help people who had a hard time with English with hospital information, citizenship matters, etc.

"Many years ago when they had the Bracero Program and the braceros lived in a camp, they (the braceros) attended St. Edward Catholic Church (the only Catholic church in Corona at the time) and she searched out talent amongst them. They sang, they played guitars, etc. They were always a part of her fiestas.

"Frances Martinez received many honors and while earning them made Corona a better place. Frances Martinez earned her eternal rest and passed away in 2003 at 91 years old."

There is an excellent book about Frances and her times and she contributed to it. *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons*, by Jose M. Alamillo, is available at the Corona Public Library." Also available in the Library's Heritage Room are dozens of photos, music and documents that Frances and her family have generously donated for all to enjoy.



Photo above: Courtesy of Corona Public Library
To the left: Daughter Sylvia Martinez Barnett

Save the Date for a Coming Attraction in 2012



This movie was filmed in and around Corona in 1949 and will be shown at our first Quarterly Meeting of 2012.



Date: Saturday, February 25

Time: 10:00 A.M.



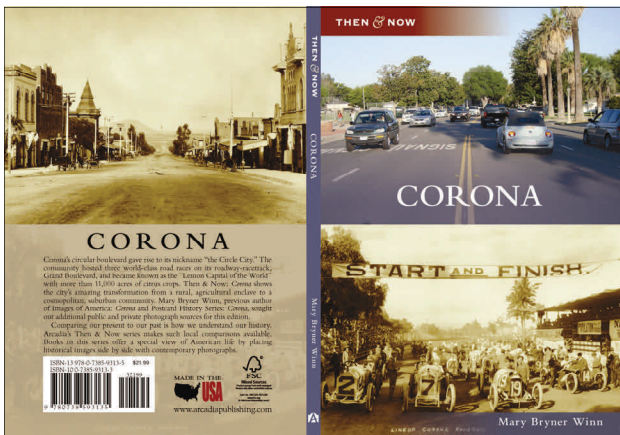
Location: Community Room of Historic Civic Center
815 West 6th Street, Corona

Starring:

Ginger Rogers, Ronald Reagan, Doris Day and Steve Cochran

The film, released in 1951, was controversial as it was about the Ku Klux Klan. It was Doris Day's first non-singing role.

Updates to Share with You



Mary Bryner Winn has been working diligently and is close to finishing her third book, *Then & Now: Corona*, and submitting it to the publisher. All proceeds will go directly to the Corona Historic Preservation Society, as has been the case with her previous two books.

To the left is the finalized book cover featuring vintage photographs that have not appeared previously in print. This is the case with nearly all of the "then" images contained in the book. Many Coronans as well as former residents have been very gracious to share images from their private collections. Watch for upcoming news in this newsletter regarding the release date of Mary's book with associated activities and book signings.

LEMONIA GROVE HISTORIC SITE MARKER:

Life Scout Joey Clark from Troop 421 is continuing to work on all details necessary to place the granite marker displayed at Lemonia Grove during our recent Vintage Home Tour (seen in photo at right) on a base located outside the gate to the citrus estate located at 2750 Rimpau.

He has proposed that the concrete marker base be covered with commemorative bricks with the names of those supporting his project; the CHPS Board of Directors and homeowners, Jim and Patti Anderson, have agreed.

He is still developing the donation list of items he will need to complete the project and potential donors for those items as well as a list of those that wish to purchase bricks or make monetary donations.

He is receiving payments from those that have already made commitments to purchase bricks.

He expects to complete his Eagle project by mid-January.



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

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I'd like to volunteer!

Hospitality refreshments
Newsletter writing articles
Vintage Home Tour
docent / volunteer
Board of Directors

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

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

Barbara Becker
Jim & Cathleen Bryant
John & Carolyn Coutts
Lloyd Dunn
John & Jane Farr
Mark German
Aaron & Lauralynn Hake

Kenneth Gomez & Christina Meza
Larry & Teresa Lavorgna
Gary & Doris Osko
Richard Polen
George & Carrie Pope
Alan & Nancy Royce

George & Pat Scott
Jason & Dee Scott
Roberta Stambaugh
Bill & Karen Stein--Life Members
Julie Stern
John Wiles

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.



Board of Directors

President - Christine Gary
Vice President - Mary Winn
Secretary - Doris Osko
Treasurer - Richard Winn

Directors

Jackie Bland
Thurston "Bubba" Bland
Paula Muñoz
Tom Muñoz
Don Williamson

Directors Emeritus

Marla Benson
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, November 16, 7:00 pm at CHPS office

Thursday, December 8, 6:30 pm at Woman's Improvement Club Clubhouse



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

Woman's Improvement Clubhouse



Location of our Holiday Party

Corona High Madrigal Choir...



will provide entertainment at
our Holiday Party

**Our Traditional Holiday Party will take place on
Thursday, December 8 See page 3**