

A Message From Our President Wes Speake

Dear Members,

As winter throws a last minute curveball of freezing temperatures, the calendar that screams Springtime is just around the corner. In Corona spring is a joyous time of year as we see, hear and smell nature come to life all around us. I have written many times about the wondrous smell of millions of orange and lemon blossoms that filled my nostrils as a child growing up just a block north of Ontario Avenue and the Foothill Fruit Stand. You can still venture to Heritage Park and stand amidst the lemon grove, close your eyes and smell the scent of citrus blossoms, and that flood of memories seems to come right back. I like to take a stroll among the trees at the park a couple of times a year to remember what it was like to live in Corona in years past. Just don't pick the lemons because the Park sells its crop every year to help fund its preservation and its programs.

Speaking of Heritage Park, we had our first Quarterly Meeting at the Model Train Society Museum on Saturday, February 19th. It was great to see so many smiling faces! More on that later. I believe our Vice President Eric Bergreen has a special treat planned for our 2nd Quarterly Meeting! It's a truly special place in Corona History, and I know there are very few people that ever had a chance to visit this location. Fingers crossed, everything works out well for our plans. So please stay tuned and watch for details.

2022 is a Banner Year for Historic Preservation and it's only March!

2022 has been a phenomenal year for historic preservation! So far this year, the city council voted to bring forward plans in the 2022-2023 budget to vastly expand the heritage room; enveloping the entire second floor of the library, with expand viewing/working areas, bringing the entire collection into one location and increasing access for historians and others studying Corona History, while enriching volunteer opportunities. In January, the council also voted to revitalize the area in front of the Historic Civic Center and make the former Civic Center fountain a gathering place that highlights the iconic and National Reg-

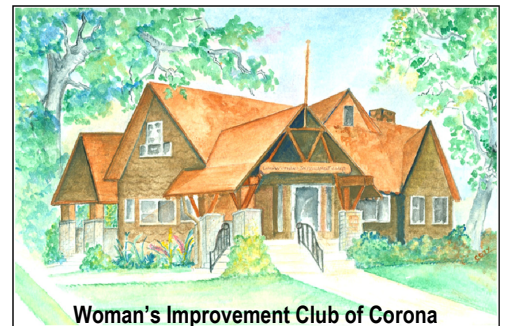


Wes speaking at Woman's Improvement Club meeting

ister listed Corona High School campus. Designs to come later in the year.

In February, the council voted to award the Woman's Improvement Club of Corona (WICC) a Grant for \$150,000. to reshingle the leaky roof, from the city American Rescue Plan funds to replace revenue and fund raising losses resulting from COVID-19. WICC President and CHPS Board Member Amelia Nieves and WICC Historian Doris Osko gave passionate speeches

to the council regarding the 120+ years of service this amazing organization has provided to the residents of Corona. They were accompanied by dozens of wonderful WICC members and other interested citizens.



Woman's Improvement Club of Corona

At the urging of the CHPS, the city has initiated the refurbishing of the iconic West 11th Street streetlights. Work on this project began the week of February 25th and will be completed by the end of March. Work includes blasting and painting and placing the correct historic glass coverings. More on this later in the article on page 5 about these gems. Lastly, we have finally achieved our fundraising goal for rebuilding of the **Veterans Memorial Wall at Butterfield Park** and work should start soon. Whew!!!



Veterans Memorial Wall in 1969

See you all soon!

Stay warm, stay healthy, and above all smile. It's good for you!

WES



First Quarterly Meeting Report

By Eric Bergreen

On Saturday February 19th, CHPS held its First Quarterly Meeting of 2022 at the Corona Model Railroad Society HO Scale railroad layout at Corona Heritage Park and Museum with a great turnout of about 25 members.

Formed in October of 2001, the Corona Model Railroad Society has moved full speed ahead. The organization has created and continues to update this historic reproduction of 1940s Corona-area rail systems and continues making great strides. Visitors enter a simulated period station waiting room where you are directed down a hallway - soon to be flanked by a twenty-five-foot mural depicting the Santa Fe route between Los Angeles and Chicago, explaining that the east coast would have had no fresh California citrus without railroads. On the other side is a mock-up of the exterior of an old Pullman car.



Through panels of protective glass that can be raised or lowered like windows on a train, you can gaze upon a meticulously scaled miniature rendition of 1949-era Corona: the Third Street Pacific Electric Line, the rail-side packing houses, and the Main Street depot right off Grand Boulevard. Visible eastward down the tracks is Riverside, with all of its own packing houses and industries. Looking westward, coming through the hills of the Santa Ana Canyon, you'll see the chugging of a train pulling a string of refrigerator cars full of citrus products. Off in the distance, you can see nearly every building, street and siding along the Fullerton right-of-way. It is an incredible landscape - not painted, projected, or holographic - but created with tiny, detailed models. Here's a fun fact we learned: 1949 was the year that steam powered trains changed over to diesel powered locomotives.



Scheduled operating sessions for the train society are held Saturdays from 10:00am - 2:00pm and the public is welcome to walk-in and enjoy. So bring the whole family down to see this wonderful display. The model railroad is housed in its own 100+ year-old building, separate from the museum, and does not operate on the same

schedule.

The Park and Museum property was established in 1911, by S. B. Hampton as the Corona Foothill Lemon Company. What remains

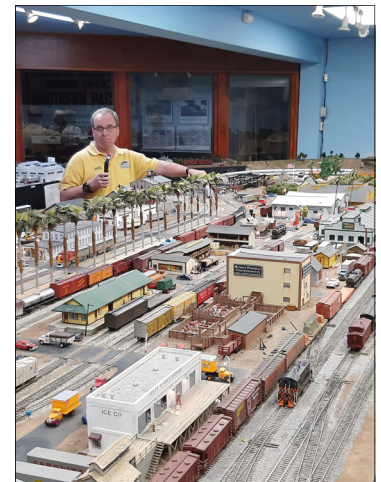
now was the center of 2000 acres of groves, once the largest single lemon ranch in California. The headquarters and surrounding buildings were converted to Corona Heritage Park on December 7, 2000.

CHPS placed one of our historic markers on a unique monument made of used brick and capped with an irrigation valve assembly used in the citrus industry.

Members also took a tour of the Art Colony building which is also over a hundred years old. The Colony was founded in the summer of 2011 by Eric Peterson and the Corona Heritage Foundation. The theme for the artwork was Foliage and Leaves. There were beautiful paintings depicting landscapes, fields, and mountains full of lush trees and gardens with wonderful renditions of plants and flowers. Many artists contributed to the gallery and is a must see for any art aficionado. The Art Colony will also be having a grand opening for an art exhibit at Dos Lagos on March 10th located across from Z Gallery.

This event wrapped up with a tour of the museum itself. When you first walk in you will see what appears to be a company store in the style they would have had back at the turn of the last century. On display are glasses, jars, pitchers, and other wares shaped like lemons and oranges. Near the entrance are pictures of Corona and its founders from over a hundred years ago and information posters about the foundation and incorporation of the Circle City.

Spaced throughout the museum are glass display cases featuring relics, artifacts and models of historic buildings from our city's beginning. Also on display are old citrus crates, smudge pots, grove tools, and pictures of our three famous road races from 1913, 1914, and 1916. Corona Heritage Park and Museum is not only unique to Corona, but also in its success as a 100% volunteer non-profit organization that doesn't rely on your tax dollars. The Board of Directors and hundreds of supporters sustain the Corona Heritage Foundation in its thriving artistic, cultural development and daily operations of the park and museum, which receives approximately 30,000 visitors every year.



CHPS would like to give a big thanks to our model train guide, Rosemary Capuano, Model Railroad Club members and all the wonderful people at the Heritage Park and Museum for letting us tour the grounds and enjoy another successful Quarterly Meeting.

See page 6 for contact information for Heritage Park's Model Railroad Society and Art Association.

For Easy Access to our Facebook Group

By Mary Winn

Facebook has provided the Corona Historic Preservation Society with a way for others to easily reach the CHPS Facebook Group.

As the administrator of the Facebook Group, Facebook sent this QR Code (abbreviation for Quick Response code) to me to help facilitate others access to our Group via a smart phone.

Scanning the modern-day barcode with your smart phone should allow you to quickly open the CHPS Facebook Group.



Riverside County History Symposium Register NOW!



REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!!

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2022:

Begins at 10:00 AM

The Riverside County History Symposium will be held virtually only on March 5th due to the pandemic.

No entry fees will be charged.

This event is hosted annually by the Riverside County Heritage Association which endeavors to educate the general public about the history of the county by sponsoring this symposium and other history related events. Two presenters are featured:

10:00 AM: "Early Riverside Photographers" by Leigh Gleason

Riverside's first photographer operated on the speculation that they could drum up enough business to sustain themselves, and most did not. Hear stories and see images from Riverside's many short-lived photography studios and the photographers that ran them.

11:00 AM "Rock Art of Riverside County" by Steven Freers

Southern California is rich in pictograph and petroglyph evidence of spiritual interactions by Native Americans with their cultural landscape. This important cultural heritage is often collectively termed "Rock Art," and has been intriguing anthropologists and the general public for well-over a century. Modern advancements in computer and camera digital technology have greatly improved our ability to visualize, appreciate, and understand southern California rock art - especially pictographs (paintings). This is a visually rich presentation designed for the general public, and will display rock art from both Riverside and Northern San Diego Counties.

For details & to register: www.riversidecountyheritageassociation.org

Desi Arnaz Ranch Relocation & Renovation By Shay Cortez

I had the opportunity to tour the Desi Arnaz Ranch House which has been renovated into a beautiful event venue in Eastvale. The ranch was once located at 1158 Rincon Street Near Lincoln Avenue, and relocated to Eastvale when they built the cheese factory. The area is now home to a commercial complex.

According to their website, Jurupa Community Services District Parks and Recreation Department notes that, in 1960, Desi Arnaz Sr. built a home in Corona that mirrored his childhood home in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba. The home would become his playground away from the Hollywood life, where he would entertain his friends. After his death in 1986, the Altfillisch family purchased and relocated the house to its current location off of Citrus Street in Eastvale. When the surrounding 365 acres were sold years later for a new housing development, the deal stipulated that the house remain intact. As such, in 2015, it was purchased by JCSD as part of the Santa Ana River Trail Extension Project.



A view of the living room once enjoyed by Desi and his friends



The colorful and updated kitchen



Approaching the ranch house, this is what you see



An expansive view of the back of the house



Two views of the front of the house



View of the decorative fountain in the rear yard with chairs set up for a wedding

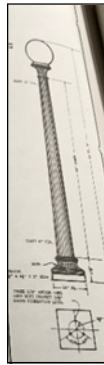
Corona's Oldest Streetlights to be Refurbished By Wes Speake

I was 12 when my family moved to Corona. I still remember riding in my dad's truck headed to a night coed softball game that was held on the softball fields behind the Historic Civic Center, then City Hall. My dad had softball fever and joined every league he could find, this time dragging my mom into his "field of dreams." My brothers would always beg off so they didn't have to come for some reason or another. But I loved everything about it, seeing my friends, eating at the snack bar, and playing around the civic center. I always asked to ride up front because my dad liked taking Grand Boulevard to 6th Street then to Buena Vista to hunt for a parking space. I was mesmerized by the streetlights on Grand, short and squat and made of concrete putting off that slightly yellowed light out of those acorn shaped lights. To this day, I still prefer to take Grand Boulevard in order to marvel at the twinkle...

In the spring of 2017, while scouting houses for the 2018 Vintage Home Tour, I turned west on Grand and drove down West 11th Street and immediately noticed that these poles were similar to the concrete streetlights but were clearly metal, as they showed a slight bit of rust underneath a whitewashed color and the same acorn lights streetlights on Grand, but they just didn't look right and I noticed a big "C" on the access door. C for Corona, right?

After a few months of research, I got in contact with Anna Justice. Anna was a consultant/contractor and worked with Artist Chris Burden to find the 202 cast iron lights for his installation piece at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), called "Urban Light." Since its opening at LACMA in February 2008, *Urban Light* is indisputably the most popular artwork on campus. Anna sent me some great reference material, and immediately I knew that these lights were made by the Union Metal Corporation and were made from 1906 to 1930. She let me know these were a combination of two different model lights; a slightly ornate model No.883 top and shaft and a blocky Model no.717 bottom. In those days and still today street-lighting mixed top and bottoms, sometimes for cost, sometimes for supply reasons. In 1915, Union Metal Corporation published its first catalog, coinciding with the start of this subdivision. Union Metal eventually supplied more than 4400 towns and cities with streetlights. Union Metal Corporation is still in business in Canton, Ohio. So the "C" stands for Canton, not Corona.

So, when did these lights get installed and by whom? In 1913 and 1914, West 11th street was used as the pit row/staging area for the road races on Grand. With no races in 1915, the S&S Investment Co. of Los Angeles purchased the 12.5-acre parcel between Merrill and Vicentia and called it "The Speedway Tract". Advertising a wide street, 5' concrete walkways, curbs, gutters and electroliers... most streetlights in those days were gas lamps, so electric streetlights were called electroliers. It was very unusual to have streetlights in a residential area of this density. The developer also advertised the phrase "Protective Building Restrictions on all lots in this Tract" which was code for Whites only, which was common at the time...



When the lights were switched on for the first time, on July 16, 1915, it was a spectacle and the public came out in droves to see 11th Street "illuminated like Broadway in Los Angeles".

Lots were to be sold one at a time. It appears that sales were brisk at first, but mostly to land speculators as several parcels changed hands in the next ten years but houses weren't built in any substantial numbers until the 1920s and 30s. By 1925, Mayor Colbern had bought up several lots and started advertising build-to-suit homes for the same price as rent!

So why are these streetlights different than the rest of Corona? Arguments and petitions raged for years for street lighting in the city. Streetlights were the symbol of a successful city and people clamored for them, so much so, a few months after the Speedway Tract was lit up in 1915, residents petitioned that all proceeds from future races would be put toward ornamental streetlights. Discussions in 1914 through 1930, usually focused on major streets and main thoroughfares. In fact, for years, only a single arc light hung at the intersection of 6th and Main Street and before that a gas-powered lamp. The process at the time was for a neighborhood to petition the city for streetlights. In the teens and 20s that included only lights on the corners for safety with all neighbors paying a portion and a lighting assessment. The Speedway Tract was unique, for the time, as the developer paid for and installed the lights and petitioned the city to connect them to the grid and assess property owners the lighting fees, much like it is done now.

I believe that the 15 remaining streetlights (20 were proposed) are original to 1915, therefore being the oldest operating lights in the city of Corona.

In 2017, after 102 years of painting and patchwork, these lights have seen better days. The CHPS approached the city to refurbish these lights, but the city budget wouldn't allow for a special program for these lights. Over several years, fundraising ideas came and went. Contractors and plans fell by the wayside until Fall of 2021 when I met a contractor, Streetlight Restoration Specialists, Inc., that specialized in repairing antique streetlights. They embraced the project and provided the city with a bid, and the Public Works Department mobilized to make it happen. In December 2021, city staff was provided with the documentation for the lights including drawings of original connections, bulb shape (the original covers were round not acorn shaped) and had four possible colors: Natural Copper, Verde Antique, Oxidized Copper or Statuary Bronze. The City's project manager, with Richard Winn nearby, climbed a ladder to look at the crown of the pole to see if an original color could be discerned. Nothing definitive could be seen. After an access panel at the base of the pole was opened, a few flakes of paint were visible, a light green tint showed itself. As of February 24, 2022, work has begun to completely restore these historic treasures, with original round bulbs and light green paint. The project will be completed by end of March 2022.

Heritage Home Selections Resume By Richard Winn

After a two-year hiatus due to lockdowns, mandates and executive orders resultant of the COVID-19 pandemic that prevented CHPS from recognizing worthy structures, we are now acknowledging homes identified in 2019 that have received or will soon be receiving Heritage Home Awards.



1002 Victoria Avenue



1926 South Main Street



711 West Sixth Street



1124 South Vicentia



1120 South Vicentia



Corona Heritage Park

To Learn more about the Model Railroad Society, the Arts Colony, and the Museum, visit the following links:

Train –
www.cmrsclub.com

Art –
www.theartscolony.org

Museum –
www.coronaheritage.org

Membership Information

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

Individual Member \$30.00
 Family \$40.00
 Student \$15.00
 Business \$60.00
 Patron \$125.00
 Life \$600.00

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 and mail to:

CHPS

P.O. Box 2904

Corona, CA 92878



We Welcome Our New & Continuing Members

Tom & Karen Alexander
 Kathy Farley
 Gary & Trisha Henson
 Eric & Karen Maldonado
 Marianne Nguyen
 Amelia Nieves

Crystal Orabona
 Douglas Fields
 Fred & Vicki Parr
 Nathan & Roberta Reed
 Dottie Reichard
 Gil & Kelly Vela - Patron Membership
 Nancy Wyatt

Home Preservation Grant Program

The CHPS Grant Committee along with the Board of Directors of the Corona Historic Preservation Society would love to assist local homeowners in making exterior improvements to their historic homes.

We will process any application within 60 days after submittal. Once a grant has been approved and reimbursement limits established, funds will be made available upon completion, inspection and onsite final approval.

Take this opportunity to do some fixing up and have part of the material cost covered by CHPS. Remember we are interested in helping people beautify their homes for others to see, so applications are primarily for curb appeal projects. If you have a place that you feel needs help, either your own



or a neighbor's, please contact CHPS Home Preservation Grant Program Coordinator Rich Winn at rwinn141@gmail.com/714.328.0010. We will assist you in any way possible to provide the information you need to complete the application process.

Grant applications are available at the Community Development Department at Corona City Hall at 400 South Vicentia, and at the Heritage Room of the Corona Public Library.

More information and grant applications may also be downloaded from our website:
[<http://corona-history.org/grants.html>](http://corona-history.org/grants.html)

Please share this information with others!



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

Board of Directors

President - Wes Speake
Vice President - Eric Bergreen
Secretary - Shaylene Cortez
Treasurer - Richard Winn

Directors

Chris McCoy
Paula Muñoz
Amelia Nieves
Kelly Vela
Mary Winn

Advisors

Marla Benson
Ted Taylor



To contact us call
951.898.2044

Please leave a message



Our Mission Statement

The Corona Historic Preservation Society (CHPS) is an active nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)3 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.

[*As a precaution for the safety of Directors, Board meetings may be held via electronic means. Contact President Wes Speake if you wish to be included in an electronic meeting.]

All members are invited to attend.

The next meetings will be:

Tuesday, March 22, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office
Tuesday April 26, at 6:30 p.m. at CHPS office

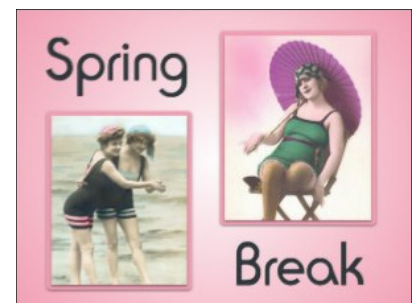


Visit our website: www.Corona-History.org



Corona
Historic
Preservation
Society

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



We welcome Kelly Vela to our Board of Directors!