

San Pedro Bay Historical Society Newsletter

SPRING 2021

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Online Programs for May and June

“After Church It Was Baseball: How a Sport Helped Shape Mexican-American Communities in San Pedro, Wilmington, and the South Bay.”

Just in time for baseball season, we're excited to present an online panel discussion **May 16 at 1:30**, led by San Pedro native and former newspaperman Ron Gonzales. About the title of the discussion, Ron explains that Mexican immigrants, arriving here in large numbers during and after the Mexican Revolution, created a sense of community through organizing and participating in baseball as well as softball. Joining Ron to look back at successful players, Mexican American ball clubs, and the impact of the sport will be Olivia Cueva-Fernandez, Professor Richard A. Santillan, and Alex Moreno Areyan. All have authored articles or books about the Mexican American experience in the South Bay, Los Angeles or harbor area. Additional information about the panelists will be posted on our website.

To register for this panel discussion, send an email to sanpedrohistory@gmail.com by May 14. In the body of the email, please provide your full name, and in the subject line write “Baseball.” An invitation Zoom link will be sent a few days before the event.



On **June 27**, things take a different turn with a presentation by Julie Rogan. Her topic: **“A Brief History of Feedsacks: An Early Example of Upcycling!”** Julie is an avid quilter and a fabric aficionado. At the last Muller House Museum quilt show, she demonstrated piecing techniques with her compact Singer Featherweight sewing machine. The program will begin at **1:30**.

* The first 20 members to register will receive two 2-inch samples of feedsack fabric by mail!

To register for this presentation, send an email to sanpedrohistory@gmail.com by June 25. In the body of the email, please provide your full name, and in the subject line write “Feedsacks.” An invitation Zoom link will be sent a few days before the event.



Another Treasure from the Archives

With the Archives in the Municipal Building still mostly off limits, it wasn't possible to search the extensive photo collection for images of local Mexican American ball clubs. The photo above, however, was digitally available and too good to pass up. It comes from one of the newly scanned large-format negatives in the collection, some of which will eventually be hosted online by nearby CSU Dominguez Hills.

The Fashion Pants softball team poses in front of the Fashion Pants Shop sometime in the 1930s or possibly late 20s. The shop was located at 710 S. Pacific in the still-standing Sederlund Building (built in 1923). The suited fellow wearing a straw boater is possibly shop owner and team sponsor Henry Bagdasar. The *News-Pilot* regularly covered the team in detail as it did the other local softball and baseball teams, which bore the familiar names of the sponsor, the sponsoring business, or its products. The “Pantsmen”—yes, that’s the moniker sportswriters bestowed—had a good run until 1942, often squaring off against teams like the Three Pigs or Kanasters. Let us know if you can identify any of the players in the photo!

Reopening on the Horizon

If the downward trend of COVID-19 cases continues, we are hoping to welcome visitors again to the Muller House Museum in June. Safety protocols in effect at the time will be observed. Reopening the Archives awaits an all-clear from the Municipal Building. We anticipate that for a while visits to the Archives will be by appointment.

A New Project Taking Shape

Our Landmarks Committee has been considering ways for the Society to recognize a variety of notable San Pedro buildings and sites, including places associated with individuals important to the town. The City of Los Angeles has its own program of historic-cultural monuments, and at least 16 buildings and sites in San Pedro make the city list. Included are places that readily come to mind, like the Warner Grand Theatre, the Cabrillo Beach Bathhouse, and our own historic Muller House Museum.

The city criteria for recognition can be somewhat narrow, excluding buildings that are locally important but which may not meet all of the architectural or historic criteria that a mostly non-local review panel imposes. The Landmarks Committee, with the support of other SPBHS board members, feels that there is value in recognizing places that speak to our collective memory and signify the many ways we are connected. To that end, we are proposing the creation of plaques to mark these places. Along with the plaques, the history of places so recognized would be described in a brochure and on the SPBHS website.

While the project is still in the development stage, several individuals already deserve thanks: Landmarks Committee members Patti Kraakevik and George Woytovich have contributed time and financial support to initiate the drafts of a plaque design. Thanks are also due Stephanie Mardesich, who several years back suggested we take inspiration from London's blue plaques that mark places of obvious historic significance as well as the lesser known. If things move forward, we will begin exploring means to fund the project.

A Yard & Boutique Sale in the Near Future

Usually held annually, the Yard & Boutique Sale helps fund our operating expenses. We're hoping to bring it back this July or sometime in the summer. In fact, it's on the verge of being a dire necessity. The garage and workroom of the Muller House Museum are filled, thanks to your donations. Special thanks go to Rose McGillivray, who donated loads of items from her curio shop, Rosy Scenario, when it closed last fall. We still seek items for a future silent auction and for the Gift Shop.

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Mary Stanley, 1924– 1921

Former SPBHS president Mary Stanley passed away March 17 at the age of 97. Those of us who knew Mary remember her with great fondness. Optimistic, kind, and forthright, Mary was devoted to education and had numerous professional accomplishments. She earned masters and doctoral degrees in nursing from UCLA, was president of the California State Nurses Association in 1965, and became chair of Nursing at Harbor College, where she taught before retiring. Mary also served as the SPBHS vice president and secretary, arranging for some outstanding fieldtrips and programs. Her board minutes were exemplary for their conciseness and clarity. With her husband, Harold, she enjoyed traveling around the state to represent SPBHS at meetings of the Conference of California Historical Societies.

As did many others in her generation, Mary came to California from the Midwest (Kansas) during WW II, landing a job at Douglas Aircraft in Long Beach, where she met Harold. She was also active in Eastern Star and with the Assistance League of San Pedro-South Bay. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Paula and Joe Bowker, two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. April 1 a memorial service was held at Ocean View Baptist Church followed by interment at Green Hills.

Other Passings

The previous issue of the newsletter announced the passings of several society members and friends in 2020. Two more are acknowledged here:

Todd Titterud, creator of the website "My San Pedro." Todd's website can still be viewed at mysanpedro.org.
Norma Munger, a longtime volunteer at the Muller House Museum and the Maritime Museum.

Take a Look at the New Brochure!

An updated version of the Society's brochure is included with this newsletter. The hours of operation at the Archives and the Muller House Museum are given (once reopened), and note that we can offer tours of the museum by special appointment made in advance if the docents' schedules permit. To inquire about a tour outside of regular hours, please send an email.

We hope you will share the brochure with others who are interested in San Pedro history and encourage them to join us. The yearly dues are low, and there are special rates for seniors, students, and families. A membership form is included as part of the brochure.