

# Historical Guides Association Newsletter

## Winter Wrap 2009

### Walk & Learn with Marj

On Thursday, May 28, the HGA will meet at the San Simeon pier at 10:00 am for a walking tour of Old San Simeon. We are fortunate to have Marj Sewell as our guide. She is currently a volunteer docent in the castle's Living History program. When she was a young girl, she lived in the newly-built bunkhouse on the

Hearst Ranch because her father was hired to grow vegetables and take care of the gardens at the bottom of the hill.

During Mr. Hearst's final years at the castle, his grandson John used to spend time at the ranch. John was known as Bunky and he attended Pacific School with Marj in 1945-46. She was invited to his thirteenth birthday party at the castle where guests enjoyed the movie *Operator 13* starring Marion Davies in the main house theater.

This walking tour will be followed by lunch at Sebastian's. Contact Bobbie Hamilton by email at [A77Bruin@aol.com](mailto:A77Bruin@aol.com) for details.

### Sneak Preview with the Vickies



From left to right, former HGA secretary Constance Gordon, HGA secretary Patti Rowe, HGA vice president Karen Harris, HGA president Hollie Stotter, author Vicki Kastner, HGA member at large Eric Weiss, photographer Vicky Garagliano & HGA treasurer Bobbie Hamilton.

Victoria Kastner spoke at the standing room only HGA meeting on February 23 reprising some of her talk at the *Hearst the Collector* exhibit at LACMA. She also previewed her brand new book, *Hearst's San Simeon, the Gardens and the Land*. Victoria Garagliano, photographer for both books written by Kastner, was there to run the slide show.

### Meet the Board ~ Debbie George

The newest member of the HGA Board of Directors is Debbie George, Guide I. In addition to giving tours, Debbie is involved with Living History and also gives school tours and accessible tours. As if that weren't enough, she is currently attending Cuesta College as a fine arts major. She plans to transfer to Cal Poly in the interdisciplinary studies program.

She says she loves being a student and juggling class schedules along with two jobs. In addition to her work at Hearst Castle, she's also a care giver for elderly clients. So once in awhile she has to jump in her Miata with the top down just "to blow the dust out of my brain."

Debbie has a daughter named Sara and a 7-year-old granddaughter, Stella, who just loves her "Grandma Queenie." She says the favorite guy in her life right now is Woodrow Eugene, a mini Dachshund with an adorable, impossible to resist face.



### Riding the Range at the Ranch

On April 21 and 22, approximately 60 lucky HGA members were treated to a view of the Hearst Ranch very few enjoy. Our gracious host was Hearst Ranch Operations Manager Cliff Garrison. The first day was glorious and visitors could see forever. The second day was fogged in, but Garrison was grateful for the moisture saying "we'll take anything we can get for our grasses." Both groups enjoyed the surprise Hearst Ranch Beef barbecue served in the end at the dairy barn.



HGA members listen to Cliff Garrison on April 22 (top left), Hearst Ranch Operations Manager Garrison (above).



A wobbly balustrade is given support with steel rods and epoxy, but first it is taken apart with each baluster carefully numbered (below) so it can go back together in its original configuration near "A" House.



## Person of the Season

by Patti Rowe

Gene Humphrey is a familiar face on evening tours. He is a Living History docent who began volunteering on the



Gene Humphrey has volunteered more than 2,500 hours!

hilltop in 1995, inspired to sign up by a Living History fashion show in Atascadero. Since then, he has dedicated more than 2,500 hours to bring the hilltop to life for visitors on evening tours.

Gene grew up in Mendota, near Fresno. His parents moved from Mendota to Atascadero and when he visited them, he decided he also liked the area and settled there in 1961. He taught fifth and sixth grade for 32 years. After he retired from teaching, he continued to work building and remodeling homes. He still does building and remodeling as jobs come up and relaxes by playing golf or following his keen interest in politics.

Gene played in high school, college and dance bands. His specialty? Rock and roll! He played saxophone back in those days, but it has been a long time since he has picked one up. He has a good voice and if you're lucky, you might hear him singing along with the pianist in the assembly room during evening tours.

Gene remembers coming to the castle in 1961, when the Visitors Center was a small booth where tickets were sold and guests came up the road in school buses. He wants people to know how much he enjoys the company of his fellow docents and the Living History staff. When he was asked what he enjoys most about the castle, Gene expressed an insightful perspective, "For a man to have that much freedom in life to do exactly what he wanted to do...and now I get to enjoy a rich man's pastimes.

## Patches

If you still need some of the current California State Parks patches, the HGA bought a new supply. The price is still \$5. We only bought 50 patches so if you want one, see Eric Weiss before they're gone.

## Book Reports —



**Rage for Fame**  
by George Cartter

Sometimes we laugh at ourselves when we can't seem to get away from seeing a Hearstian connection to so many facets of life. Clare Boothe Luce was a guest of William Randolph Hearst's at San Simeon. Henry Luce owned *Time* and developed *Life* magazine while in the process of marrying Clare Boothe. It's a family in to publishing, politics and partying.

Somewhat like Mr. Hearst, Booth Luce was a powerful, energetic, intriguing character who was often admirable only in limited qualities and quantities. Her circle of personal and/or professional relationships was one that overlapped a great deal with Mr. Hearst's realm of acquaintances. People in her life who were also guests at San Simeon include: economic advisor to presidents Bernard Baruch; Ambassador Joseph Kennedy; authors Anita Loss, F. Scott Fitzgerald, George Bernard Shaw, and P.G. Wodehouse; radio personality Ilka Chase; British statesman Winston Churchill; and New York Mayor Jimmy Walker.

*Rage for Fame, the Ascent of Clare Boothe Luce* was written by Sylvia Morris in 1997 and it ends when Boothe Luce is elected to Congress as a representative from Connecticut. Another book in the Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument staff library is *Henry and Clare*. That book mentions *Parade* magazine speculating that Boothe Luce might be considered a possible Republican nominee for vice president in 1944. Sixty-four years before Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton, there was buzz about Boothe Luce, who entertains the idea of a larger platform for her talent in a letter excerpt at the end of *Rage for Fame*.

If you enjoy a sense of the 1920s, '30s and '40s in San Simeon and the networking possibilities there, *Rage for Fame* adds another strong layer of historical connections.

**The Uncrowned King**  
by Karen Harris



Karen Harris & Kenneth Whyte, Pelican Cove Inn, January 17

Kenneth Whyte was the picture of composure as he walked into the lobby of the Pelican Cove Inn on Moonstone Beach on a beautiful Saturday morning. One could barely believe that he was in the middle of an international book tour. This Canadian businessman is already a major celebrity in his country's publishing industry and is currently making a sensational splash on the world stage. As an editor and publisher, he relishes the term "sensational," and as the author of the newest biography on William Randolph Hearst, he thinks it's time to give proper credit to the man who married that term to media.

His first book, *The Uncrowned King*, was released in late 2008 and has already caught the attention of the literary world, including this little hamlet that surrounds Hearst Castle. In spite of the local community's fervent interest in this book and an author's reputation that should precede him, Mr. Whyte almost slipped through the fingers of local Hearstophiles on his recent sojourn to our humble coast. Alas, even Aramark and the Castle's world-class publicity office could not hide him completely.

The Guide Association was on the investigative prowl and scooped an interview with this latest "Hearst-connected" celebrity. What follows are some highlights of a conversation with a professional who lives, in many ways, in parallel footsteps to WR. He has also researched Mr. Hearst extensively for the last ten plus years.

Kenneth Whyte is the first editor and publisher of Canada's 103-year-old news magazine *Maclean's*. He went from reporter to his current position in less than twenty years. That meteoric rise was also quite

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## History & Restoration

"I'm just in awe of anybody who could design such a building," said Bob Soto at the HGA meeting on November 18 when asked about Julia Morgan. Soto fascinated more than 35 people with the history of his family and details of restoration projects on the hill. He retired as a Restoration Supervisor II in 2003.

### Soto Family History

The de Sotos immigrated to New Spain "sometime after 1520," said Soto, and settled in the Sinaloa area of what is now Mexico. That's when they dropped the "de" from their name.

In 1775 the Sotos were among 30

families selected to join an overland expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza. They walked more than 1,600 miles from Sonora, Mexico through the desert where Arizona is today to Alta, or upper California, bringing with them 1,000 head of cattle, horses and mules. This expedition led to the founding of the Presidio in San Francisco and missions San Francisco de Asís (Mission Dolores) and Santa Clara de Asís.

Ignacio Soto, his wife Barbara, and their two children arrived in San Francisco in March 1776. In August of 1776, Francisco Jose de los Dolores Soto was born and baptized at Mission Dolores, the first non-native to be born in the San Francisco area. His father, Ignacio, was a soldier at the San Francisco Presidio until 1785 and died in 1807.

The Sotos slowly migrated south to Monterey, then San Jose, then to the area of San Juan Bautista, and finally to the Mission San Antonio area, where Bob's great, great grandfather, General Herculeano Soto, homesteaded on 160 acres in the Adelaide area during a drought, on a property they called "dry bones" because of the bones of dead animals scattered there.

His oldest son, Cipriano (Bob's great grandfather), started working for Phoebe Hearst at the age of 17 as her coach driver. He said she was "always generous and gracious." He worked for the Hearsts his entire life and according to Soto, "loved them."

Cipriano Soto's son, Earnest, started working for the Hearsts as a night watchman in the 1950s. He worked on the ranch during the day and eventually his son, Vernon, worked as a cowboy on the ranch joining as many as 25 Sotos working there. Bob said the Hearsts would hire Sotos to cut wood on their ranch to burn in Hearst Castle fireplaces.



Cipriano Soto in the 1948 La Fiesta parade in San Luis Obispo. He is riding a Hearst stallion with a silver Hearst saddle.

Vernon was Bob's father and Bob started working for the monument in 1967. Bob's son, Monte, worked at the castle last summer, making him the fifth generation of Sotos to work there.

### Restoration Recollections

As for memorable projects supervised by Soto, there were three: recovery from the "C" House bombing;

replacing windows in the Celestial towers in the early 1990s; the Roman Pool challenge.

Casa del Sol was bombed on February 12, 1976. Soto said the bomb was outside on a deck, under a marble bench and it "blew a hole through the floor" and "blew out a picture window," with "shrapnel hitting the gold ceiling." Because that ceiling was "not attached in some areas," Soto said they first had to stabilize it by attaching it to rafters in the attic with hemp soaked in plaster.

Windows 80 feet in the air in the Celestial towers had to be replaced because water penetrated the concrete, rusting the rebar and causing it to expand so pieces of concrete would sometimes fall off. That rebar was replaced with a stainless steel armature.



## Library Wishes

by Sandy Jennings

Some great new additions to the staff library have come from HGA members who have stayed alert while browsing book stores, flea markets, and yard sales. For example, Patti Rowe brought in a biography of John Barrymore written by Hearst guest and journalist Gene Fowler. Chuck Walker spotted the "Marion Davies Edition" of *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. Our collection of DVD films featuring former movie guests is small. The library could truly benefit from your bargaining skills in the event you spot a gem.

Please stop by the library to make suggestions of what you'd like to see in our collection. We compile an ongoing "wish list."

The HGA really stepped up to the plate when *Hearst the Collector* became available as a companion piece to the LACMA exhibit. The library gratefully accepted two copies of this book and two copies of *Hearsts' San Simeon, the Gardens and the Land* that were gifts from the HGA. Many thanks!

## Teddy Bear Picnic



Visitors, hilltop workers and guides were greeted by a teddy bear in the historic bear pits last November. We'll probably never really know the origin of the stuffed creature.



## Soto continues

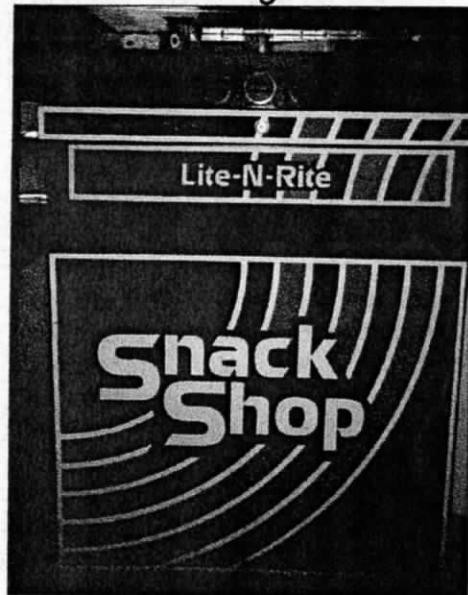
Replacing the skylights over the Roman Pool required six-inch squares of one-inch thick glass. Soto said these were custom made by an outside company.

He also ordered two million new Murano glass tiles. These were put together upside down using documented patterns, then set in place with Plexiglas. He also installed giant dehumidifiers to stop the moisture from dripping down the walls.

Soto considers the main house to be "a fortress, especially after I worked on it." But he admits the roof really needs to be replaced.

Generations: Ignacio ~ Jaldoro ~ Lazaro ~ General ~ Earnest ~ Vernon ~ Robert ~ Monte

## Munchie Money



Many thanks to Chuck Walker who keeps the hilltop soda machines stocked and who also found retro snack machines for us on ebay. If you forget your lunch or you didn't bring enough to eat, you can buy a granola bar, cookies, cheese and crackers, candy bars, pretzels or cornuts and benefit the HGA at the same time. There's one machine in the guide trailer and one in the Historic Services kitchen and lounge behind the Roman Pool. If you have suggestions for what should be in the snack machines, please contact Chuck.

## Islamic Influence

Former Hearst Castle Guide Jerry Howe spoke to 35 members of the HGA in March about the many contributions to the world of the Islamic civilization. He showed a recent edition of *Newsweek* in Arabic with a green cover, the color of the prophet Mohammed. He also talked about reflections of Islamic culture at Hearst Castle, especially at Casa del Sol. He told the HGA that a surprising number of words in English have origins in Arabic. And he said the Islamic civilization founded and developed plain and spherical trigonometry so they would know which way Mecca was in order to face it for prayer five times a day.



Eric Weiss & Howe

## Welcome Class of '09

The HGA welcomes the new class of tour guides: Andy Boush; Jim Cadreau; Larry Crawford; Amanda Dall; Ani Garrick; Andy Hampp; Bohdi Hodges; Tom Hogan; Lynn Hughes; Becky Isaacs; Brent Kennemann (congratulations on the new baby!); Lorenzo Lago; Tim Mayer; Marty Moon; Thom Page; Linda Riddle; Michele Smith; Lisa Winn. Don't make this the only time you're mentioned in the newsletter. Join the HGA and get active!

## Hilltop Happenings

Congratulations to Wayne Fiske on his impending nuptials.

Jill Urquhart was promoted to full time guide on May 1.

Scot Steck was promoted to Guide II Supervisor on April 1.

Constance Gordon was promoted to Interpreter I in charge of PORTS distance learning for the San Luis Obispo Coast District on April 1. She is also celebrating the birth of her first grand niece, Aberdeen Rose Hudson, on February 18. Abbie's parents graduate from medical school on May 15.

Beth Stephenson and her husband Richard moved to Oregon. Her new address is: 2415 NW High Lakes Loop, Bend, OR 97701.

Welcome back Lou Graeber and Debbie Donaldson!

John Fixler was promoted to full time guide supervisor at the ticket office in November 2008.

George and Marlene Carter's daughter Teresa and son-in-law Scott are the proud parents of Luisa Carter Calvert, born October 6, 2008. Luisa has a 3-year-old brother, Sam. Grandpa George was promoted to full time guide in November.

Dave Babcock, Steve Hamill, Judy Larner, Gary Lee, Russ Surber and Bill Tyson recently retired from guiding.

Jeff Schultz successfully defended his master's degree thesis at Cal Poly on the collaboration of Mr. Hearst and Miss Morgan.

Shannon Harmon's father passed away peacefully in November. Our condolences.

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an education. His on-the-job training was peppered with anecdotes and references to America's newspaper wars and yellow journalism. He firmly believes the arc of history will show that those wars began the zenith of eras in newspaper publishing. Whyte argues that Hearst made a risky business thrive by becoming reader-based saying, "He put the reader first, he never broke faith." He feels this daring move shaped an empire and an industry. Mr. Whyte says that if today's print industry has any chance of survival in the 21st century, it must return to the tried and true methods practiced by Hearst and Pulitzer.

The title of his book *The Uncrowned King* comes from a title bestowed upon Mr. Hearst by William Stead, a British newspaperman visiting the U.S. in the 1890s. He felt that the education afforded the masses by Hearst papers had elevated an ordinary gentleman, through no title or election, to a station of respect and power.

William Randolph Hearst would, most likely, have appreciated the origin of the title of this book and the argument that the biography makes for his place in history. He would have also surely respected, as only like artists can, the genius of its author.

## Run for Office

Treasurer Bobbie Hamilton reports the HGA has 130 members who paid dues for 2008-09. We welcomed 58 new members. We're hoping many will want to serve on the board of directors. Elections for two-year terms will be held in the fall. If you're willing to serve, please contact a current board member.

## Board of Directors

Hollie Stotter, president  
Karen Harris, vice president  
Bobbie Hamilton, treasurer  
Patti Rowe, secretary  
Members at Large: George Cartter,  
Debbie George & Eric Weiss  
Program Suggestions:  
Box 94 in the guide trailer