

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 2019 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2019

TIME: 6:30 PM

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of March 9, 2019.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY March 21, 2019 starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Steve Hon	Sharon Turner
Katherine Hon	Jody Surowiec
Paul Spears	Randy Sappenfield
Judy Ciampoli	Hilda Yoder
Michael Thornhill	

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

George Franck	Claudia Watts
Bob Bauer	

Welcome all!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter was circulated for viewing.

The January 2019 PastMatters column in *Uptown News* discussed the history of the Red Fox Room Steakhouse and Piano Bar in the corner of the Lafayette Hotel. The article was circulated for viewing and a scan appears at the end of these meeting notes.

The annual conference of the Congress of History will be held at the Portuguese Historical Center Hall in Point Loma on Friday, March 29 and Saturday March 30, 2019, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm each day. The theme this year is "Defining Moments, 250 Years: Extraordinary Events that Shaped the History of the San Diego Region (1769-2019)." If you want to register for this very interesting conference, the total cost is \$35. A scan of the registration form is on page 5 of these meeting notes. The North Park Historical Society is not part of this conference, but several of our members attend each year, and it is always worthwhile.

Sharon, who volunteers for Alzheimer's San Diego, shared that Michael gave a great tour of the Railroad Museum in Balboa Park for caregivers and their loved ones. Michael noted that he showed the group the layouts and many were very engaged by the model trains and scenes in the layouts.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the January 17, 2019 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4-5. TREASURER'S REPORT AND COUNTY GRANT APPLICATION

The financials for the period of January 16 through February 18, 2019 were sent to Board Members before the meeting. During this period, two members renewed (thank you, Bob and Sue!), and one other member renewed for two years plus gave us a donation of \$25 (thank you, Pat!). Total income in this period was \$105.00. There were no expenses in this time period.

Katherine announced that she filed our federal income tax statement with the IRS.

Steve noted we want to replace the display easels we have been using for nearly the past 10 years. At the last meeting, Bob suggested we look in an art supply store for sufficiently heavy duty easels for our outdoor displays. Steve went to the art store in Hillcrest, but found that the easels there are made of wood and do not collapse for easy transport. However, there are some flip chart type easels available online that should work for our purposes. Sharon moved and Randy seconded that we purchase two such easels. The motion was approved unanimously.

Update: Two "heavy duty silver flip chart aluminum display stand presentation easels" by Bayfield Signs were purchased online through Amazon for approximately \$80 each and have arrived at NPHS headquarters (Steve and Katherine's house). The easels are adjustable in height, have rubber-tipped feet, and collapse for storage and transport.

Steve stated that he delivered the application for \$2,000 from the County of San Diego through their Community Enhancement Grant Program, and we have received confirmation from the County that everything is complete. The request is for \$750 to support the 10th Annual Car Show, and \$1,250 for our Public Art Consultant to continue advising us on the art project for the fence near the North Park Water Tower. Steve noted that the County is not holding public hearings for applicants now, so we do not need to make a presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

6. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT

The final conceptual design was presented to the selection committee by the artist team of Bhavna Mehta and Lynn Susholtz on November 7, 2018. The final conceptual design was approved by the selection committee at that meeting, and by the NPHS Board at the November 15, 2018 meeting.

A permit application for consideration as a 5-year loan was prepared and submitted to Christine Jones, our contact at the City, on December 4, 2018. If the City's review is favorable, this final conceptual design will be revealed to the public and used to raise funds for the plans and specifications, manufacture, installation, and maintenance. Christine Jones replied on December 12, 2018 that she will follow up with us after staff review of the application. We requested an update from Christine early in February, but have not received a reply. Steve will send her an email reminding her the Board needs her input.

7. FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS UPDATE

North Park Main Street has waived the booth fee for NPHS. In return, Steve and Katherine attended a very interesting meeting at the North Park Theatre (Observatory North Park) with Representative Susan Davis (D-CA-53) and Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC-5) as part of the American Congressional Exchange program launched by the Bipartisan Policy Center. Rep. Foxx was very congenial and enjoyed learning about the history of the theatre and how its restoration stimulated a renaissance in the heart of North Park.

8. REVIEW OF BUILDING PERMITS FOR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: CHANGES IN CITY PROCEDURES

The City suddenly changed its process for receiving community input about building permits being requested for properties older than 45 years. Paul has been providing input on whether or not a full historical report should be prepared in response to receiving an email with a list of permit requests broken down by community plan area. The emails would also provide photos of the properties. However, now the City is just posting addresses on a web page for only 5 days, and it is up to anyone concerned to keep checking the website. Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) has requested a meeting with staff of the City's Development Services Department to discuss these worrisome changes. SOHO noted that problems with the new process include:

- There is no posting date
- The community plan area is not identified
- There are no building photographs
- The submittal of a historic report is not identified
- There is a shortened turn around period of only 5 days

Paul will keep us updated on if he needs help with providing input and if SOHO gets a response from the City.

9. PAULY'S ADDITION ASSESSMENT FOR A POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Last summer, NPHS investigated the potential for the historical subdivision of Pauly's Addition to qualify as a historic district. Pauly's Addition encompasses 20 blocks extending from Alabama Street on the west to Arizona Street on the east, and from University Avenue on the north to Upas Street on the south. We conducted field reconnaissance and gathered information about condition, style, date of construction and first owner into data tables. We sent a letter to the Chair of the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) summarizing the results and recommendations.

Steve noted that the HRB Chair acknowledged he received the letter, appreciated getting it, and would like to meet to discuss it further. The HRB Chair also said he showed the material to staff, and they said they would be open to receiving a community-nominated historic district application.

As directed at the last meeting, Steve put the data tables along with photos Katherine has taken of some of the houses in the neighborhood on a Pauly's Addition project page on the northparkhistory.org website. He also put photos of some homes in the Dryden Historic District on the walking tours page of the northparkhistory.org website. He showed the web pages on his computer and the group thought they looked good. Katherine will write about the Pauly's Addition research project for her next PastMatters column in Uptown News.

One other suggestion from last month still to be enacted is developing a walking tour of the best parts of Pauly's Addition.

10. PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICTS

There are no updates on the proposed Park Boulevard or Melhorn historic districts.

11. UPCOMING COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The annual events NPHS is participating in or organizing include the following:

- Table at San Diego History Center: Tuesday, March 12, 2019. NPHS will have a display table in the lobby of the San Diego History Center. This annual opportunity to connect with people visiting the History Center on a free Tuesday is always interesting.
- North Park Festival of the Arts: Saturday, May 11, 2019. Our booth fee has been waived.
- North Park Car Show: Saturday, September 7, 2019, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Balboa Tennis Club has agreed to host us for our 10th and Final Car Show, and Steve has already obtained the permit from the City to use the parking lot. We hope it will be our best. It has been a good run, but we also look forward to re-focusing on core activities like walking tours and other educational outreach.
- Toyland Parade: Sunday, December 8, 2019. This is the second Sunday in December, a change from being held on the first Saturday. North Park Main Street has taken over organization of this event, which is a good thing.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY March 21, 2019 starting at 6:30 p.m.** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by



Katherine Hon

Secretary, North Park Historical Society

DEFINING Moments 250 YEARS

Extraordinary Events that Shaped the History
of the San Diego Region (1769-2019)

Registration Form 54th Annual History Conference

Friday, March 29, and Saturday, March 30, 2019

DOORS OPEN 8:30 A.M. TALKS START 9:00. END AT 4:30 P.M. CONFERENCE LOCATION: **PORTUGUESE HALL**
2818 AVENIDA DE PORTUGAL (POINT LOMA), SAN DIEGO, CA 92106 • FREE OFF-STREET PARKING.
MANY HISTORY TABLES AND VENDORS. LUNCH IS ON YOUR OWN. THERE ARE MANY FOOD OPTIONS A BLOCK AWAY.
(MAPS SHOWING LOCAL RESTAURANTS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE CONFERENCE)

Please print and then fill out this registration form. You may also join or renew your Congress of History membership. This is old school.
Make your check to "Congress of History." Mail your completed form with your check to Congress of History Conference,
P.O. Box 1346, Lemon Grove, CA 91946 no later than 3/21/19. Walk-ups welcome. After 3/21/19 email this registration form to
HistoricSanDiego@aol.com so we can create your registration badge and you pay at the door. Bring cash for book purchases!

Name (ONE person ONLY per form) _____

Individual's Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Individual's Phone(s): Home (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____

Individual's email address _____

Organization (if any), or School (if any) _____

Organization's Phone (_____) _____ Organization's email _____

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

One Attendee at this 2-day Conference (price is the same if you can only attend one day): \$35 \$ _____

One Senior (65 & older) Attendee: \$25 \$ _____

One Student (12 & Older, with student ID): \$15 \$ _____

COH MEMBERSHIP (our year runs from July 2019 through June 2020). Please choose one of the following:

Individual member: \$20 \$ _____

Senior member (65 & older) or Student (12+, with ID): \$15 \$ _____

Organization, Business, or Family membership (circle which): \$25 \$ _____

Donor: \$100 \$ _____

Lifetime: \$250 \$ _____

Our newsletter showcases the historic happenings of our member groups. It is sent via email. Use individual or organization email (circle one).

TOTAL PAYMENT (conference and, if applicable, membership): Your check # _____ \$ _____

Conference Registration and Membership payment may be written in one check. Make your check or money order payable to Congress of History.

Keep history alive. Support UNITY & JOINT EFFORT.

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Mail this form and your payment to

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BACK TO THE '60S IN THE RED FOX ROOM

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

Walking into the Red Fox Room Steakhouse and Piano Bar is like stepping back in time to the 1960s. You might expect to see Don Draper from the television show "Mad Men" enjoying a two-martini lunch in a corner booth. Maroon leatherette banquet seats curve around the darkly paneled dining room. The piano in the bar waits silently for the evening entertainers.

The Red Fox Room comes by its historical ambiance authentically — it opened on Oct. 18, 1959. This classic bar-restaurant at the corner of El Cajon Boulevard and Louisiana Street adjoins the historic Lafayette Hotel. Installation of a steakhouse dining room was part of a remodeling and renovation program for the hotel after it had been bought from founder Larry Imig by Conrad Hilton, president of the Hilton Hotel chain.

The San Diego Union's Oct. 17, 1959 issue announced that the "Lafayette Hotel will complete a \$500,000 remodeling-modernization program with the opening soon of a Red Fox room."

The first step of the hotel renovation involved construction of 34 glass-walled lanai units in two stories around the hotel's large swimming

pool. The second step was the steakhouse.

The grand opening advertisement in the San Diego Union's Oct. 18, 1959 issue explained that "The Red Fox was an old inn in Surrey, England, and dates from about 1560. The three small original rooms have been combined to form a spacious 'tap room.' The bar, backbar, and the trim around the doors with the small carved figures all came from Charles of London and date 1560. The fireplace panel with finely carved overmantel, bears the date of 1642."

Through the 1960s, Frank Rhoades periodically mentioned the Red Fox Room in his San Diego Union local news column. On May 31, 1960, Rhoades referred to "Danny Beaudet's Red Fox Room in the Lafayette Hotel," and on Oct. 19, 1961, he described Beaudet as a "singing restaurateur ... who sings 'Star Spangled Banner' over the mike at Charger football games."

Five years later, Rhoades commented in his Nov. 4, 1966 column: "You knew it all the time, of course, but I'm just finding out ... That the old Red Fox Room at the Lafayette Hotel, long a notorious loser, is buzzing with business again. Freddie Eyarkion and John Demos have turned the trick, turning it into strictly a steak and lobster house. The uptrend has justified addition of another dining room."

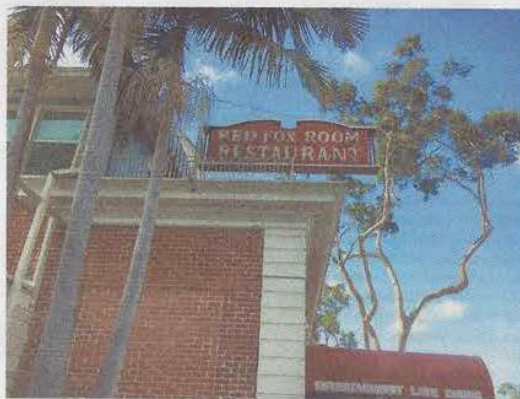
John Demos making the Red Fox Room a success when

he took over in 1966 is no surprise — he already had a long history in the restaurant business. While still a teenager, he was listed in the 1947 City Directory as manager of the Steak House at 801 C St. In 1957, he was listed as the chef, and his brother Spiro was listed as the manager. The Steak House was owned by their father William, who came to the U.S. from Greece — where he also was a restaurateur — in 1920. The family moved from Chicago to San Diego in 1947 when John was 16 years old and Spiro was 17 years old.

After more than five decades, the Red Fox Room is still run by the Demos family, with John's son Jim managing, Jim's wife Nancy keeping the books, and their teenage children busying tables during the holidays. John — now age 87 — still comes in many nights to make sure things are going smoothly.

But change is in the air for the Red Fox Room. The Lafayette Hotel is reportedly declining to renew the restaurant's lease, which will end in March 2019. Undaunted, Jim Demos plans to take the family's operation to a new location nearby. He has every expectation that their cosmopolitan and loyal crowd will follow them.

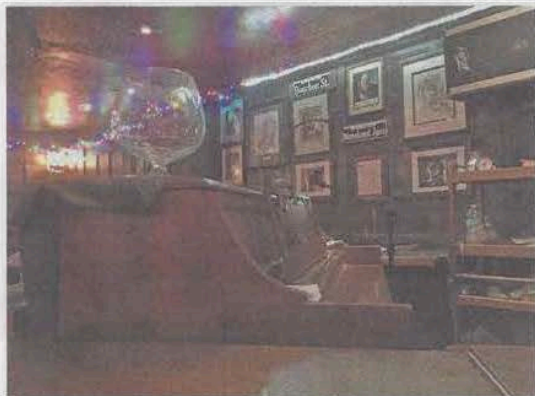
—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.



The Red Fox Room may soon be leaving its corner location in the Lafayette Hotel. (Photos by Katherine Hon)



The carved wooden figures trimming the doorways of the current Red Fox Room may be more than 450 years old.



The Red Fox Room has a long history as a classic piano bar. Beloved singer Shirley Allen performed there for 15 years, nearly up until the day she died of cancer in March 2005.



Jim Demos intends to recreate the cozy ambience of the Red Fox Room in a new location.