

San Clemente Historical Society

"Forward with the Dream"

WHAT'S HAPPENING

November 1, 2020



Board of Directors

Your Board of Director's and the staff of What's Happening wish you a great November as we VOTE by November 3, then celebrate Veteran's Day on November 11 and Thanksgiving on November 26.

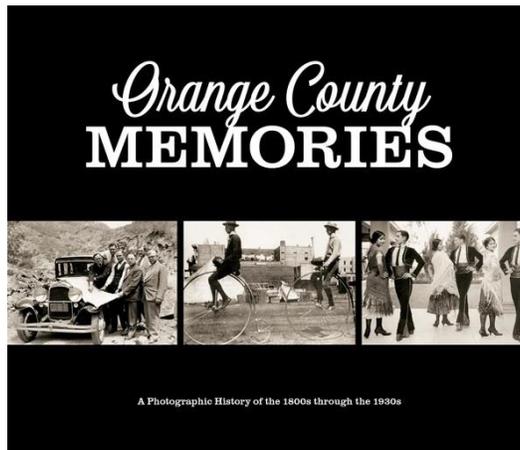
We had another productive Board Meeting on October 19. The new book, Memories of Orange County was discussed as well as development projects around town that may affect our historic resources. These subjects will be covered below.

We have been asking our Board and others for articles for this newsletter and we suddenly got a slew of them! Suzi Klickstein, Jim Hamilton, Mike Fitzsimmons, and Tom Marshall all came through with material. We will not be able to get it all into this issue. But it will be included next month! Any of our members (or others) who would like to contribute material are welcome.

Jim Hamilton has been interviewing downtown merchants and producing some interesting articles. He has an idea for doing some articles about the owners of historic homes (Oles) and their experiences of rehabilitating and living in them. Anyone want to be his first subject?

Orange County Memories:

A Photographic History of the 1800s through the 1930s



We are pleased to announce a new hardcover coffee table book. "Orange County Memories: A Photographic History of the 1800s through the 1930s." Hundreds of high quality rare photographs of Orange County, including many of San Clemente. . We are offering the book for \$35 regularly \$45. The book will be available after Dec 5. Contact **Mary Ann at 949-280-4960** if you wish to purchase one or more! Great gifts for Christmas.

Historical Society Board Member Jim Hamilton has been doing research for our Historic Walking Tours, which we hope to resume soon. He had the idea of showcasing some of the shops and people who help make our historic downtown so interesting. This month we have.....

Mikii Rathmann - Mikii's On Del Mar

By Jim Hamilton



Mikii Rathmann is the owner of Mikii's On Del Mar, an au courant, attractive, fun, gift, & party shop. Mikii's is located at 220A Avenida Del Mar in San Clemente, California. Her shop name is eponymous of her family nickname. Mikii explains, "I have an Irish nickname. My dad chose my name, and my mom wanted a creative flair on its spelling. As a child you don't want to be too distinctive; but, now as an adult, I value their selection of my name. My store is called Mikii's, my name is associated with this shop as it is a fun and joyous place." Customers, many of them preschool

aged with their parents and/or grandparents, smile when they see the colorful variety of items, then leave with a smile and some goodies.

"Welcoming, clever, up to the minute, is the appeal for our shoppers. I kept the name similar to the location's prior name of Missy's. It was a similar type of store with party supplies. Keeping the themes similar has helped me keep this business thriving. The San Clemente community, by shopping locally, has helped keep my business open during this pandemic."

Mikii worked in the hotel industry right out of college. Sunstone Hotel Investors was based in San Clemente. "My career brought me to this town, and I found that I liked the area. I have lived here 21 years. Ten years ago, Sunstone changed, and I decided to start Neon Carrot Events, my own company. Event planning was the most fun slice of my career with Sunstone. I was vice president of brand marking with them. Thirty-six events per year is still rather typical for me to put on with Neon Carrot Events."

"A year ago, I took over this shop so now Neon Carrot Events and Mikii's are in one location. I am a party girl. I enjoy preparing for parties. My dad was an epic party thrower. Every year he hosted the Bay Ranch Party on our Marin County ranch. People would gather to camp, BBQ, and make music. The highlight was to build and then perform on a stage. Folks performed all kinds of music the main style being folk rock. I noticed in my father's guests that these people would leave their troubles behind and have a good time with friends and shared interests. They came to the ranch and enjoyed a well-organized party. Life became more of a celebration."

"Neon Carrot Events range from small, about 20 people to a few thousand. Corporate conferences are my big events. Celebrations, and strategies for new programs, policies, procedures, and awards. Work combined with recognition of accomplishments and, around here, some play in the surf, enjoy the golf courses, and all the popular attractions.

"Weddings are another popular event. We are so fortunate with Casa Romantica, San Clemente State Park Historic Cottage, The Casino, Ole Hanson Beach Club along with La Ventura, the inaugural event for them. St. Regis, Monarch, Montage...we usually work in my backyard here; as we have so many beautiful local settings. I am more than willing to go out of the county where the events may take me as well.

"Event Planning is focused. I may spend a week or even a year on an event. People have different visions that I help make real. Project driven with a real beginning and a real end. Each is distinct. At the end I wrap it up in a pretty bow then progress to the next event. I like the circle aspect of events. We start, we proceed, we celebrate then come to an end. I accommodate people of all walks of life from all perspectives.

Mikii volunteers with the Downtown Business Association, (DBA) by putting on The Glitz and the Avenida Del Mar Car Show. We bring a community event to one of the main business streets in town. Overall, such events are very welcome. Fiesta is a Chamber of Commerce event and I help with that too. I have been on the board for the DBA. My business location is why I serve the DBA with a bit more dedication.

Ruby is my dog, she is 10 years old, and came from the shelter. She is a bit of a mystery kind of terrier, very sweet, very calm, with me here at the shop. Ruby loves Three Dog Bakery. She actually tugs me to visit this local bakery for dogs. My husband and I enjoy traveling. Internationally we have toured England, Germany, France, Italy, Tahiti, China, and Australia three times. We enjoy revisiting Marin County where I grew up. I was raised on a ranch with horses, cows, and goats. I was in 4H and FFA, you may say I went from being a farm girl to a party girl. I showed dairy goats, preferring the La Mancha breed known for their small ears. Cynthia was my grand champion La Mancha doe. Show goats are bottle fed. Care and

attention to detail whether it is my shop, an event, or my animals, are an aspect of my personality. One could say I have gone from being a caring farm girl to becoming a caring party girl with her own fun shop.

“My keys to success are to be present to run things, be involved, caring, while taking action on ideas. I do expect difficulties to realize a vision. It can be too easy to talk yourself out of things. If you have good ideas go for it. To expand Neon Carrot to include Mikii’s was an idea I followed through on and I am satisfied with the results. Kindness is important, communication. calm, nice, kind, not high strung or temperamental helps me accomplish various tasks that come with running an event or managing a business. Kindness does not equal weakness. I have knowledge and am prepared. I have decades of experience with so many events accomplished. It brings me joy and satisfaction to do what I do.”

Mikii’s is in a Mid-Century building, built in the 60’s. It is open with large front display windows. It has a modern rectangular design with open space and high ceilings, well illuminated, soft music playing. Helen and all the gals who work here are friendly, helpful, and accommodating of customer’s interests. It is easy to move about seeing and selecting from a variety of displays.

“My desire to create events and showcase this shop is not effortless but it is a natural outgrowth of what I like to do. Organization is part of my personal nature. I take pride in being a small business owner in our village culture. We have a vibrant community. It brings me joy to make downtown better. I appreciate our community’s support of shopping local. Our community helped this small business survive this, ongoing, pandemic. I feel part of a larger whole. A true contributing community member.”

“I really love that I am in a non-Ole Hanson building. The diversity of structures makes Avenida Del Mar and our town more interesting. It is fun to be in a mid-century building and to keep it up. Its bright, open, clean, modern setting helps with our displays. The architecture is really in the background my gifts, balloons, and party items are available to my customers.”

Mikii’s mission is to make your life a little more fun with ease. Please visit her store!

Preservation

Two historic residences in the Pier Bowl have gone through the Cultural Heritage Committee for Historic Property Preservation Agreement (HPPA) approval. 504 Monterey Lane and 109 Alameda Lane are both beautiful examples of our Ole Hanson Era homes. The HPPA provides a property tax reduction in exchange for owners agreeing to provide high quality maintenance of their property. They are given a checklist of rehabilitation points that must be completed within a set timeframe. Those points now include termite and structural inspections.



A project proposed for the now shuttered San Clemente Art Supply is being watched closely. The applicant is proposing an event center and café. The proposal includes the construction of a seven-foot-tall solid wall to surround the outdoor garden

area on the north side of the building. This wall might hide the north elevation of the building. The north elevation has a beautiful exterior staircase and other important architectural features.

The Miramar Event Center project is progressing. The applicant has requested to add more restaurants inside the Bowling Alley. This would add more exhaust vents to the roof which would detract from the appearance of the building. We concur with the Design Review Sub Committee that those exhaust fans are not acceptable. An alternate plan needs to be found.

Historical Society Board Member Mike Fitzsimmons has lived in San Clemente for longer than most of us. He has some great stories about the "good ol' days." Here is one of them...

By Mike Fitzsimmons
Eric Hogstrom



In 1950 Eric and Beth Hogstrom lived in one of the last built "Ole Hanson style homes" in San Clemente. Built in 1935 their Spanish Colonial white stucco red tile roof house was one of three such houses on Avenida Cadiz, the street where I grew up. Eric was one of the last hard hat, air hose commercial abalone divers. He was a tall slim rawboned older Norwegian who stored all his lobster traps and piles of discarded abalone shells in the lot he owned next to his house. There was also a small rowboat and lots of ropes and other equipment used in commercial fishing. The yard was enclosed by a 5-foot-high white wooden fence separating it from the surrounding open fields. His yard was a great place to explore. The fence proved itself no obstacle for a young adventurous boy.

Eric took me "under his wing" as a surrogate father while my father was away fighting the Korean War. He showed me how he made a living diving for abalone and lobster trapping, and I could always count on a glass of milk and a cookie when visiting his house. Beth would tell me stories about growing up in Southern Orange County in the early 1900's, while I played with her two small Mexican chihuahua dogs named Pico and Pancho. She claimed to be a direct descendent of Pio Pico, the last Mexican Governor of California. Beth was very religious and not very healthy. She rarely left the house except to attend church.

I attended church with them several times. Their church was a small white wooden church close to the mouth of San Onofre Creek. It was there to provide Catholic services to the Mexican field workers. A priest from the main church at San Juan Capistrano Mission would arrive to conduct services. The church could seat less than 30 people. It was on a grassy meadow sloping down to the creek. Numerous old date palm trees provided shade for the church and the meadow. Eric showed me where large steelhead trout would migrate upstream when winter rains broke open the mouth of the creek. The church, the meadow, and most of the palm trees are long gone, but the area is still known by surfers as "Church".



7. -Baja de la Playa. Foto-Piper J.L. 1910

When I was about 8 Eric took me with him on one of his commercial abalone dives. He first piled all his diving equipment in the bed of his old pickup truck. We drove north along Hwy 101 passing only a few cars as we reached Capistrano Beach. We stopped at the old "Hide House" to pick up more equipment and Eric's friend "Pops" who would run the air compressor on Eric's boat. The air compressor would pump air through a hose down

through the water to Eric who would be gathering abalone. Lorin "Whitey" Harrison, a well-known historical surfer, was living with his wife Cecilia at the Hide House. Cecilia was direct descendent of the Yorbas, one of the first California pioneering Spanish families.

After leaving the Hide House we drove up the grade on Hwy 1 past open pastures fenced to keep the cows off the road. Near the top of the grade we turned left on to a dirt road blocked by a barbed wire fenced gate. We continued along the road, passing several jack rabbits "hot footing it" across the road, upset by our intrusion. The dirt road became steeper as we wound our way down the side of a narrow canyon lined with cactus and coyote bush. The area is now occupied by the large Marriott Hotel surrounded by Lantern Bay Park. The dirt road is now Golden Lantern Street.

The last part of the road leading to the water was much steeper. At the bottom was a small flat area where Eric and a few other commercial fishermen parked their pickup trucks before launching their skiffs. The water was calm due to a short rocky promontory of land sticking out into what would become Dana Point Harbor 20 years later. The promontory was later removed during the construction of the harbor.

Eric had a larger boat anchored a short distance offshore. The boat was about 25-30 feet long with a open rear deck with an air compressor. We rowed out to the larger boat, and after offloading gear Eric started the "one lung" diesel engine. As we motored out around the Point Eric put on his diving suit as Pops steered the boat. His suit consisted of the classic screw on metal diving helmet with the large front viewing glass and an air hose connection. Attached was a thick canvas suit with led weighted boots. For insulation he wore thick wool underwear.

About a quarter mile offshore we anchored, and Eric slipped over the side. He carried a large canvas bag and a metal pry bar. Pops ran the air compressor and a rope line attached to Eric. I watched excitedly. The water was crystal clear, and I could see deep down. Thick rust red kelp patches surrounded the boat, their long thin stalks disappearing into the deep. For what seemed like a long time there was nothing but the throbbing of the compressor and patches of air bubbles rising slowly to the surface. Eventually Eric surfaced with a large bagful of abalone. The red abalone were all large, most measuring almost a foot across. I had never seen live abalone before.

While Eric was taking a break and trying to warm back up, he allowed me to go for a swim around the boat. The water was cold, so he gave me full woolen underwear. The underwear was way too big for me, but I put it on anyway. When I jumped into the water, I was glad I had them on. I felt like I was floating in a large hairy bag. I didn't swim far from the boat. I kept looking down into the deep water looking for any sea monster that might rise up and grab me. After floating over a kelp bed, I returned to the boat.

After another dive Eric had all the abalone he wanted. We returned to the anchorage and retraced our earlier route. Most of Eric's abalone would be trucked to Los Angeles where it would be sold or shipped to the Orient. There wasn't much of market locally. Abalone was not the pricey delicacy it is today. Not many locals appreciated eating an animal related to the snail.

It may seem ironic that 30 years later I was a California Fish and Game Warden responsible for enforcing laws protecting abalone. It might have all begun with the experience of a young boy and an old commercial abalone diver, one of San Clemente's early residents?

**That's all for now, see you next month.
Please Stay Healthy!**

