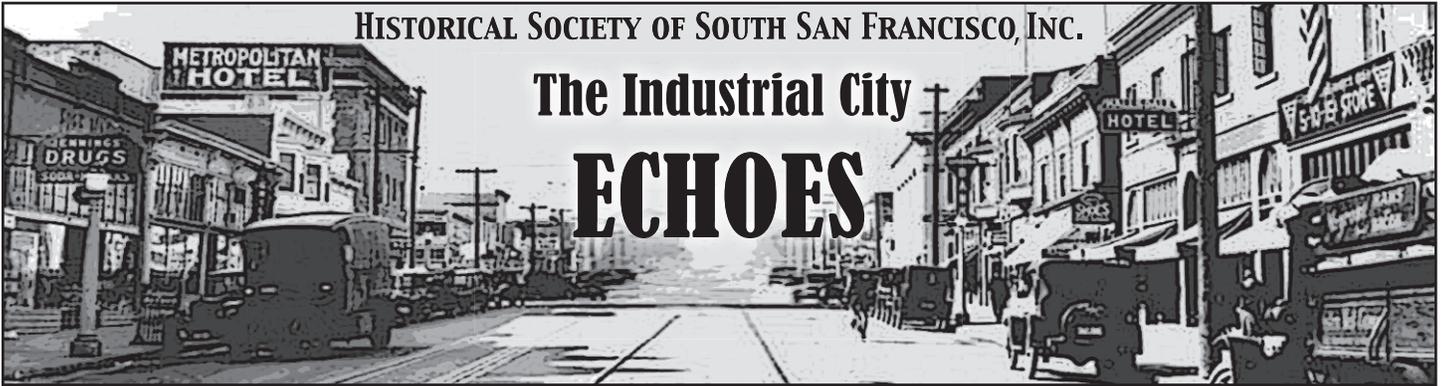


The Industrial City ECHOES



www.ssf.net/history

Newsletter No. 132 - December 2015

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2015 Calendar

December 21 General Meeting

General meetings are held at:
Magnolia Center, 601 Grand Ave. - 7:00 p.m.

Board Meetings are held at:
Society Museum, 80 Chestnut Ave. - 7:00 p.m.

*Members are welcome to Board Meetings.
Members and non-members are welcome
to General Meetings.*



Program for December General Meeting

December 21, 2015, 7:00 pm

Magnolia Senior Center, 601 Grand Avenue, South San Francisco

AN ACAPPELLA BARBERSHOP CHORUS formerly known as The Golden Chordsmen, will be performing at the December general meeting. They have performed at Filoli for members' nights. They also sing Valentine's Day greetings and perform at the annual CalTrain Holiday Train which visits nine stations between San Francisco and Santa Clara, bringing friends and families together for holiday lights and Christmas giving where they collect childrens' toys for children who might not get them otherwise. Please come to the meeting to hear their beautiful songs.



This program is free and open to members and non-members.

*Refreshments will be served
after the program.*



September General Meeting

Mike Futrell, South San Francisco City Manager, spoke about the State of the City – the current and future projects he foresees, as well as his perspective on the direction of the City.



*Officers sworn in by Rick Ochsenhirt
Gloria Lagomarsino, Victoria Healy, Dave Casagrande*

Message from Historical Society President

Here it is, the end of another successful year for our organization. Thanks to all volunteers who made this year very profitable. Can't say "THANK YOU" enough for our members and non-members who attend our functions. Not only does "Margie and Jo, Jo and Margie" do a great job planning the Victorian Tea and the Holiday Champagne event at Plymire-Schwarz House, but they sure know how to recruit a hard working team. Donna Smith and Sam Bonanno organized a fun Pedro Tournament, which we hope to repeat next year. I certainly need to thank my annual banquet committee; Cisca Hansen, Sylvia Payne, Donna Smith, Valerie Sommer, Mary Giusti, Lynn Boldenweck and Jeanette Acosta. Which by the way, the profit for this year's banquet was \$5,897.61!!! Thank you, Gloria, for the great job preparing our newsletter. It's not easy for her to get articles from us on time. "Wishing you a joyous Holiday Season and good health and happiness in 2016!"

— Ginny



In Memory

Louis Vasco

Steve Sanquinetti

Ron Sciandri

New Member

Betty Schlaepfer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention Cookie Brigade

Please remember to bring a batch of your favorite homemade cookies on December 21st.

Many Thanks!

Program Ideas

Do you have slides, photos, artifacts or interesting stories about South San Francisco. Share your family or business history. Contact the Historical Society at 650-829-3825.

Museum Accessions/Acquisitions

- **Carol Morgan:** Deck of playing cards from SSF Dubuque Meat Packing Plant
- **Richard Di Giacomo:** Tour Guide Book: Historical Gems of the SF Bay Area (2015)
- **William Seekamp:** Packard-Bell Model 501 Radio (c. 1954)
- **Lillian Viall:** Photograph of Igolena Cuneo (Jan '80)
- **Thelma Fisher:** Four (4) SSF Downtown Art & Wine Festival glasses (1990 & 1991)
- **Maria Martinez:** Bust of Abraham Lincoln (date unknown)
- **Evelyn Martin:** Pearl handled nutcracker belonging to Maria Martins; and a shaving mug and brush belonging to Evelyn's uncle, Antonio Soares.



Now there's another way to find out what's going on with the South San Francisco Historical Society. Follow us on Facebook

Join the South San Francisco Historical Society Help Preserve Our Storied History

If you are interested in becoming a new member or to renew your membership please fill out this form and mail with check made out to: South San Francisco Historical Society, 80 Chestnut Avenue, So. San Francisco, CA 94080

Name/Names/Corporation _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Student \$5.00

Individual \$15.00

Family \$20.00

Supporter . . . \$25.00

Corporate \$100.00

Life Membership . \$500.00

(Peninsula Independent 12/22/1998)

Sign Hill Christmas Tree Up Until New Year

City's tradition started nearly 30 years ago

By Jennifer Pearson Bennett
Staff Reporter

The weekend after Thanksgiving marked the beginning of the holiday season, with people starting to scurry about and counting the days until Christmas or the new year.

Some people pull out the decorations every year, while others start making regular visits to area malls. Still others make vacation plans and seek time off from work.

But the weekend also marked the day Peninsula residents began to gaze on Sign Hill's decorated tree, with its nearly 800 bulbs.

No one is exactly sure who came up with the idea, back in 1969, to light an annual tree that can be seen for miles.

Richard Bordi, superintendent of the South San Francisco Parks and Facilities Maintenance Department, assumes it was the 1969 City Council.

City employees Ed Lawson and Robert Cain, who are both now retired, designed the "tree," a 90-foot telephone pole with "leaves" designed from steel cables wrapped with strings of lights.

"It was quite an engineering thing they came up with back then," Bordi said.

"At that time it was powered by a generator. It wasn't until about 1973 that we got electricity up there."

The annual undertaking begins Nov. 1, when staff members from the city's Electrical Department install the cables and strings of lights. But the tree is not lit until the weekend after Thanksgiving. This year that day landed on Nov. 28.

There are 28 strings of lights, with 28 lamps per string.

The bulb colors vary from year to year, according to Frank McAuley, who works in the city's Electrical Department.

One year the tree looked like a candy cane, with white and red stripes, while another year the city installed multicolored lights.

"But that didn't work out too good because yellows don't look good, and the blues and greens get lost," McAuley said.

The tree had become a tradition for South City, Bordi said.

"If we wouldn't put it up, I'm sure we would get a lot of calls from citizens wanting to know why. It's become part of us now," he said.

One resident said she can't remember a year without the tree on Sign Hill.

"As far back as I can remember, that tree was a part of Christmas," said Rosanna Hernandez, a 20-year resident of South City. She now lives in Pacifica.



Photo by Roger Cain

"Being a kid, (of) the memories I have about growing up in South City the lit Christmas tree up on the hill was the one that stood out.

"When the tree went up, you knew it was Christmas. It was a part of South City, just like See's Candy putting up Santa Claus, Lilac Lane and City Hall lighting their lights."

In the late 1980s the city installed an Easter Cross on the hill, but had to remove it in the interest of keeping religion and government separate, Bordi said.

Unfortunately, McAuley said, the tree is sometimes vandalized. There have been reports of teenagers throwing stones or using BB guns to shoot at the bulbs. When this happens, a crew has to dismantle the tree by pulling down each cable and replacing the broken bulbs.

There are similar lighted Christmas trees atop Seton Medical Center in Daly City and South City's Kaiser Permanente Hospital on El Camino Real.

"People do remark about (our tree). What's nice is people see it from the East Bay, and I get compliments that people enjoy seeing it every year," McAuley said.

"Brisbane has their stars, and we have the tree."

31st Annual Historical Society Banquet

**Many Thanks to Banquet
Sponsors!**

Cisca Hansen and Family

First National Bank of Northern
California

Garden Chapel Funeral Directors

South San Francisco Scavenger
Company



Victor John Feudale Award Winners - Donna Smith and Dorothy Buhagiar



Presentation to Eleonore Fourie in celebration of her 100th Birthday



Plymire-Schwarz House

Thanks to all who made last year's Donation Match drive so successful.

With your generosity and support The Plymire-Schwarz House was able to receive some much-needed tender loving care – including a major roof repair (just in time for the anticipated strongest El Niño in 18 years!) Your donations also helped us raise about half the funds needed to repair the collapsing back porch.

As 2015 is quickly coming to an end, we again reach out for your help in raising the remaining balance needed for the porch repair. Please consider helping us with a tax-deductible donation – no amount too big or too small. Your gift will also help us to continue hosting several popular events at the House throughout the year.

Please make checks payable to
“The Plymire-Schwarz House” and mail to:
The Plymire-Schwarz House - c/o Historical Society of SSF
80 Chestnut Avenue, So San Francisco, CA 94080

Holiday Champagne Reception & Boutique

On Saturday, November 7, the Plymire-Schwarz House hosted its third Champagne Fall Fundraiser. With every room decorated for the holidays, our guests took a step back to another era. The tour allowed access to both the main floor as well as the upstairs, with our docents who provided insight and answered any and all questions.

Once again, nature provided our garden with a lovely and mild afternoon. It was the perfect spot for our garden hosts to provide a bounty of sweet treats and savories as well as a glass of bubbly and assorted beverages.

For those looking to get a jump on their holiday shopping, our expanded boutique provided three rooms of gift ideas as well as seasonal decorations to enhance the home.

The house has been blessed with great volunteers who work very hard to provide for the maintenance and care of our city's legacy. To them we send our thanks.

*Margie Casagrande, Julie Chimenti
& Jo Zemke*



**Extended
Holiday Hours!**

If you were not able to attend our Holiday Champagne Reception this past Saturday, you now have more time to tour The Plymire-Schwarz House and visit our Boutique.

Now through December 19th, the House and Boutique will be open on Saturday and Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4 pm.

Please take this opportunity to enjoy the House decked out in Christmas splendor and get a jump on your holiday shopping in the Boutique.

This information is also on our Facebook page and our website.



The Industrial City ECHOES

Historical Society of South San Francisco, Inc.
80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

South San Francisco Historical Society

Board of Directors

President Ginny Tilton
First Vice President Sam Bonanno
Second Vice President Sylvia Payne
Recording Secretary Cisca Hansen
Treasurer Julie Chimenti
Financial Secretary Donna Smith

Two Year Directors

Jeanette Acosta, Barbara Cerquettini, Lily Germano,
Robbie Huerta, Valerie Sommer

One Year Directors

Lynn Boldenweck, Dave Casagrande, Victoria Morales Healy,
Gloria Lagomarsino, Lois Mares

Ex Officio Members

Roy Bava, Diana Ferrari, Mary Giusti, Bertha Iskra, Rick
Ochsenhirt, Sylvia Payne, Ray Yoschak

Plymire-Schwarz Steering Committee

Director: Roy Bava

Jeanette Acosta, Rose Bava, Louise Brusco, Julie Chimenti,
Elizabeth Ervin, Phyllis Feudale, Mary Giusti, Robbie Huerta,
Bertha Iskra, Rick Ochsenhirt, Ray Yoschak

Museum Directors

Elizabeth Ervin and Sylvia Payne

*The SSF Historical Society is co-sponsored by the SSF Parks &
Recreation Dept. It is through the City's generosity that many of
the Society's goals are accomplished.*

Contact & Location Information

Chestnut Avenue Museum

80 Chestnut Avenue
650-829-3825
Tues & Thurs (2-4:00 p.m.) and
2nd & 4th Saturdays (1-3:00 p.m.)
Museum Committee Co-Chairs:
Elizabeth Ervin & Sylvia Payne
Office Hours: Weds (10-2:00 p.m.)
Please call if you are interested
in volunteering at the museum.

Historical Society of South San Francisco, Inc.

80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

History Room / Grand Avenue Branch Library

306 Walnut Avenue
650-877-8533
Thurs (2-4:00 p.m.) or by
appointment

Plymire-Schwarz House

519 Grand Avenue
650-875-6988
Wednesdays (2-4:00 p.m.)
Director: Roy Bava

Memberships Expire December 31

Membership runs on a calendar year expiring annually
on December 31st.
Membership is \$15.00 per person - \$20 per family.
If you are interested in becoming a new member contact
the museum at 650-829-3825 or
Mail your check to:
South San Francisco Historical Society
80 Chestnut Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080

ECHOES: 650-829-3825 • ssfhistorical@gmail.com
Layout & Design: Gloria Lagomarsino • amgraphics25@yahoo.com