



# The INNsider



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May-August

## Appreciating our Friends

*The Mission Inn Museum on Sept. 17 will open an exhibit marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the Mission Inn (a reception will be Oct.8). The writer has been a docent for many years and is the author of "The Famous Fliers Wall."*

**By Walter Parks**  
*Class of 1987*

A true friend is one of life's great assets. The Friends of the Mission Inn's relationship with the Inn in all of its manifestations bears this out. For 40 years through bad times and good, the members of this group have been there with their time, their resources, and their influence for whatever the Inn needed.

The year 1969 was the very worst of times for the Inn. The owner declared bankruptcy and

Friends in 1981-82: Back row, from left: Ray Lindelef, George Zentmeyer, Carl Fowler, Esther Klotz, Pauline Bazil, Kay Stalder, Pat Coleman; middle row: Evie Guin, Nancy Cox, Ann Hussy, Florence Ryan, Richard Richardson; front row, Myrtle Schoonover, Jean Jensen (president), Marilyn Jackson, Marie Stone, Gerry Davidson.

various schemes for the use of the property were on the table, including converting it to a retirement center or tearing it down in order to put something "useful" on the site. Responding to the prodding of Mayor Ben Lewis, the City's new Cultural Heritage Board designated the Inn as Cultural Landmark Number One. This had the practical effect of delaying destruction or artifact sales for at least one year. With this reprieve others went to work.

Patsy O'Toole, artist, businesswoman, and community activist, invited 40 people to a luncheon in the Spanish Dining Room. Sharla Wright, the current president of the Friends, attended as president of the  
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# What's up, what's hot (Riverside), what's not

**By Steve Spiller**

*Collections Manager*

Another month is nearly here, most schools are in session, and we are witnessing major changes on the Main Street mall. In two months the mall project is expected to be complete, just in time for the Mission Inn Run and the Festival of Lights. It is our understanding that the new Eliza Tibbetts statue will grace the mall near Simple Simon's restaurant sometime next year.

**Tours Under the Stars:** The magic of the Tour Under the Stars dinner and tour program continues to attract guests. This special program continues through Sept. 30 (Sundays through Thursdays).

**Store Merchandise:** Sharla Wright has added some orange crate label merchandise, including mugs, totes, and the popular ceramic crate label magnets. The magnets are selling in bunches. The Raincross ties are still available.

**City of Riverside Visitor Center Closes:** As many of you are aware, the city's visitor's center at the corner of Main and University streets closed in mid-August. It is even more important for us to make the extra effort to provide assistance to those seeking information and directions.

## ***Upcoming Programs:***

**Catacomb Tours:** We are still waiting to learn when the next Catacomb tour will be held.

In the meantime, please be sure to take names, addresses, and any other contact information for those interested in the tour. Please put the information in Nanci's file.

**Guest Speaker:** On Sept. 24, Paul Wormser, director of archival operations at the Laguna Niguel National Archives

facility, will share with us some of the Riverside "treasures" housed at the facility. San Diego Room, 6:30 p.m.

**The Inn Crowd:** The third in the series of three wine-and-hors d'oeuvres receptions will be Thursday, Oct. 1, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the St. Francis Atrio.

**Formal Exhibit Opening:** The formal opening of the exhibit honoring the 40th anniversary of the Friends of the Mission Inn will be Thursday, Oct. 8, at 6 p.m. (after a "soft" opening Sept. 17).

The featured speaker will be conservator John Griswold. John's firm is responsible for recent restoration projects funded by the Friends, including the cannon carriages and the Spanish Patio fountain.

Headquartered in Culver City, the firm is one of the leading object conservation companies in the United States. It was part of the team restoring Pasadena's Gamble House and the firm conserved the stone lions guarding the entrance to the New York City Public Library.

## Next Forum looks at G. Stanley Wilson

The next Quarterly Docents Forum will look at G. Stanley Wilson, architect of the Rotunda Wing and of Author's Row, in a meeting at the old Aurea Vista Hotel, one of Wilson's designs, on Sunday, Sept. 13 at 2 p.m.

Speaker will be Peter Weber Jr., son of the man who was chief designer for the architectural firm of G. Stanley Wilson

The Aurea Vista, now home for the Riverside Ballet Arts, is at University Avenue and Lemon Street.

The Quarterly Forum scheduled for January is to be held at the new Frank A. Miller Middle School in Riverside.

## Appreciating our Friends

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Riverside Junior Women's Club. Patsy had managed the Mission Inn Art Gallery and witnessed the disappearance of many artifacts. She proposed forming a broadly based community group dedicated to preserving the Inn, particularly the art and artifact collection. Patsy's guests accepted this challenge and the Friends of the Mission Inn was born.

The group immediately plunged into a three-pronged program with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the need. The first and immediate priority was saving the Inn. For years, the growing membership of Friends cajoled and romanced anyone and everyone, public official or private citizen, that could influence events. They joined forces with the mayor, the owners of the newspaper, and others to convince the community and government officials that the Mission Inn represented the heart and soul of Riverside and must be saved.

These efforts convinced the City Council to purchase the Inn for \$2 million from the insurance company that held it as a result of bankruptcy proceedings. The purchase and operation of the Inn by a public agency was controversial and the city ultimately resold it. However the city's involvement saved the Inn from an inappropriate use or possible destruction. The stage was set after the return to private enterprise for the complete restoration of the hotel and the renaissance we enjoy today under the direction of Duane and Kelly Roberts and their staff.

At the same time as the Friends campaigned for saving the Inn, they began a hands-on program to preserve and protect the art and artifacts. Picture the Inn in 1969. The Mission Wing was an apartment house. Young residents in cut-offs ran through the lobby with their bicycles. Only 22 rooms in the Spanish Wing were available as rentable hotel rooms. The three floors of the Cloister Wing were derelicts, full of debris and

pigeons, with art, furniture, and artifacts shoved here and there.

Water had seeped (sometimes flowed) into the Catacombs from rain and the ancient plumbing, damaging most of the paintings that hung there. Esther Klotz (author of the basic book on the Inn, *The Mission Inn, Its History and Artifacts*) organized several willing Friends into an "Artifacts Committee." Members roamed the Inn seeking out Stickley furniture, statues, bells, and paintings. They carried damaged items to their workshop in what is now the San



Sharla Wright is the new president of the Friends of the Mission Inn, succeeding Carol Krieger. A member of the Friends since the group's early days, Sharla is also manager of the Foundation's museum store.

Diego room and began the tedious refurbishing and restoration process under the supervision of Esther and restoration specialist Carl Fowler. Dozens of objects were rescued by hundreds of hours of Friends' hands-on work. Look at the pagoda model in the Museum sometime. Artifact Committee members collected scattered and broken pieces from this old edifice and painstakingly made the necessary repairs and replaced them back into the basic structure.

The Committee carefully stored all of the art and artifacts they gathered. Some they even hid to avoid further loss. Very early,  
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## Appreciating Friends

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they built a secret room behind the Friends' office on the second floor and secreted dozens of bells there for protection.

Esther found the painting "Madame K" in one of the derelict upper hotel rooms, covered with pigeon droppings. She did not know that Iliia Repin's masterpiece would later be considered one of the most important paintings by a Russian artist, but she knew enough to rescue it and secure it in a safe place. Scott Haskin, a painting restorer from Santa Barbara, later cleaned it for \$4,772. The cash to pay the bill came from the Friends' third and ultimately most important and long-lasting activity – raising money for restoration.

Obviously many items, particularly the damaged paintings, were beyond the Artifacts Committee's expertise. These needed professional cleaning and repair, which meant money had to be raised. This became the major activity as the Inn evolved from city to private ownership, closed for renovation, and reopened as a first-class hotel. By this time, the art and artifacts have been carefully cataloged and inventoried on a computer database, and the era of volunteer hands-on work passed. However, conservation and preservation work for the collection like any art collection is ongoing. This takes money, and the Friends devised methods to generate it.

Just after the City bought the Inn in 1977, the Friends received permission to set up a small gift store in the corner of the lobby where the valet stand is today. Because of the politics of the time, they agreed to sell only items that related to the Inn to avoid competing with nearby stores. In true Frank Miller fashion, they gave it a great name, "The Inn-Credible Gift Corner."

Led by Elaine Ford, this little commercial venture prospered, expanding eventually into a full-fledged store on the Mall manned by volunteers. The profits along with memberships and donations provided an income stream that enabled the Friends to

hire top experts such as Scott Haskins. To date, more than \$700,000 has been generated and spent on Mission Inn art and artifacts,

Times change, and the store closed after a successful run of 26 years. The Friends' commitment to the art and artifacts did not change. The group continues to raise funds through memberships and bequests. After 40 years, much of the work has been done. But the Friends continue to ferret out problems. Therefore when a painting is damaged or the carriages of the ancient cannons by the pool rot away, the Friends of the Mission Inn, like true friends, are there.

## Tour the Catacombs? Step right down

The Mission Inn's "Catacombs," the subterranean Cloister Walk, drew a big crowd June 13 for a docent-led Foundation fundraising event. Interest was high, with the Museum getting calls from more people than could be accommodated. Between noon and 5:30 p.m., 203 visitors were led in



groups from the Refectorio and into the narrow passageways.

The Catacombs were made sparkling clean by the hotel

◀ Chris Johnson plays a triple role – Catacombs monk, docent and Inn staffer. –Cora Lee Brown photo.

staff. Additional lights were supplied by the Foundation staff, which also installed statues and artifacts lent by docents, including Chris Johnson and Nanci Larsen, with Collections Manager Steve Spiller adding items from storage.

Many Docents wore costumes, including  
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# New Inn manager says service is the key

**By Dauris Slaughter**

*Class of 1999*

The Mission Inn had a change at the top earlier this year as Jim McCullough succeeded Joe Wancha in the management position as vice president and general manager.

McCullough, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., came to the hotel as a veteran of the hospitality industry, most recently as manager of the old Casa del Zorro in Borrego Springs (now the Borrego Ranch Resort & Spa) near Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

He spent his high school years in Massillon, Ohio, and attended Cornell University, studying the hotel business; he also took advanced management at Cornell.

McCullough's family began in the restaurant business in 1931. He got involved himself shortly after service in the U.S. Navy, working at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in Oahu. He has held many positions in the hospitality industry and has owned his own restaurants in the United States and Mexico. His resume includes posts at the McCormick Ranch in Scottsdale, Ariz., South Seas Plantation and Yacht Harbor in Florida, the Scottsdale Hilton Hotel and Spa and the Westward Look Resort and Spa in Tucson, Ariz.

McCullough said his major goal is to focus on the service level at the Inn, "to truly create a service-based culture among the staff so that we can better serve guests. We are teaching our staff what service is and how to provide the highest level of service to our guests in all venues, at all times.



"We have begun to change the culture of the management base and how they approach their jobs," he said. "With the economy as it is, we need to operate smarter in all venues and be more efficient in how we accomplish our goals.

"In these challenging economic times we are challenging ourselves to operate leaner; more efficiently and still provide the services as expected here at the Mission Inn Hotel and Spa."

The hotel has about 500 employees, he said. "We have a very large responsibility to them, their growth and their futures. We are changing our operating processes in order to facilitate employee growth, to stress a service-based environment."

McCullough said he values the Foundation's docent program.

"Docents are very important and create added value to the Mission Inn, he said. "It is unbelievable the time and commitment the docents give to this program. There is no other program nationwide where people give that much time and commitment. I have profound appreciation for all

they – I am humbled by their dedication." McCullough says he's "very comfortable" in his job, and that he is "awed by the culture and history" of the Mission Inn.

"Duane Roberts truly had a vision when he purchased the property," he said. "The addition of Kelly's Spa adds a great new and exciting venue to the Riverside marketplace, for both our hotel guests and local clientele."

McCullough and his wife, Yolanda, have been married 31 years, and have a daughter, Yoli, and a son, Alexander. When asked about his hobbies, he said, "My work is my hobby – six to seven days a week, 12 hours a day. I will be here for the long haul."

– Photo by Dauris Slaughter

## Making a Miller double for new FAM Middle School

Sculptor Richard Myer, at far right, prepares to replicate his statue of Mission Inn founder Frank A. Miller. Assisting Myer is fellow artist Charles Fogg.

The new statue, a gift from Mission Inn owner Duane Roberts, will stand in the entry area of Riverside Unified School District's Frank Augustus Miller Middle School in the Woodcrest neighborhood.

The school, which opened for students Aug. 24, will have a formal dedication in January, according to Kyley Ybarra, the principal.

The Foundation's Docent Council plans to hold its January Quarterly Docent Forum at the new school.

--Photo by Steve Spiller



## New site for Nanking Bell

The Nanking Bell, a feature of Las Campanas since it was moved from where the Frank Miller statue is now, migrated again Sept. 1 to a new spot along the entry to the Court of the Birds between the Campanario and the restaurant entry, in order to accommodate additions to the service area of the restaurant.

The bell, largest in the Inn's collection, was lifted skyward by an industrial crane then deposited gently on its new pad.

Also coming soon: a macaw cage by the cannon, with live occupants. – Photos by Emily McEwen



## Docent Council installs leaders for 2009-10

A change in the leadership of the Docent Council as of July 1 gives the group two new leaders. In the chairman's post is Mel Gutierrez, class of 2007; serving as vice chair is Jim Ferguson, class of 1995.

Gutierrez succeeds Robyn Rogers, class of 2005, who remains on the council as past chair; she will also continue as chair of the Continuing Education Committee.

Gutierrez, who has been vice chair, also served as chairman of the Recruitment Committee. The new leaders of that committee are Ferguson and Kathy Chennault, as co-chairs; Chennault also continues as Council Secretary.



Gutierrez, a Los Angeles native who served in the Navy during the Vietnam conflict, has a degree in business from Cal State L.A. He has worked for the mayor's office in Los Angeles, for the city of Anaheim and for Riverside's Library, General Services and Fire departments. He retired in 2006.

Ferguson, a Long Beach native, grew up in Orange County and graduated from Cal State Fullerton. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Venezuela, 1971-73, and later taught in Barstow, Fontana and Riverside. He retired last year after 17 years at Arlington High. His wife, Doris, was formerly a Mission Inn docent and hopes to return, he said.

Robyn Rogers, the retiring chair, was praised by docents and staff. "Robyn has done an amazing job taking the

Docent Council to a new level of professionalism," said Kathy Chennault. "Her focus has been on continuing education for docents and she led the way by instituting quarterly docent forums, which have been popular and informative. Her dedication, knowledge and passion made her an exceptional leader."

Nanci Larsen, a former docent (class of 2003) now on the Foundation staff, said Rogers' continuing education series "is the best thing we've had in a long while." She cited Rogers' "positive can-do attitude."

## Catacombs tour: Another one soon

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Johnson, who is also a member of the hotel staff, in monk's robe (tailored by Nanci Larsen). Also present was Charles Dickens and famous docent May Spiller, plus Victorian ladies and even a stuffed macaw. The Pope was there – most of him -- in the old papal court area.

The next tour will be announced soon, Larsen said. The Foundation has a long list of people who are interested in seeing the Catacombs.

Those who helped with the Catacomb tours included Margie Akin, Roberta Allotta, Marge Barr, Kay Beach, Joyce Bricker, Paul Bricker, Cora Lee Brown, Barbara Burns, Robert Cleveland, JoAnn Coble, Maria Driver, Janie Felix, Nancy Fiveland, Carolyn Grant, Ann Gruele, Joan Hayes, Yu-Chien Hsieh, Mary Knox, Carol Krieger, Chuck Krieger, Pat Marlow, Kira Morgan, Carol Nathanson, Gail Nelson, Walter Parks, Chris Skoog, Dauris Slaughter, Floyd Smith, Bruce Spieler, Roberta Spieler, Steve Spiller, Jo Turner, John Worden and Sharla Wright.

Many thanks to Inn Manager Jim McCullough, Ted Weggeland and the hotel staff for their help, including Denise Garcia, catering manager.



## Where is it?

This lacquered plaster-on-tin work hangs in plain sight in a hallway. It was one of a large number of Chinese antiques purchased for the hotel by owner Duane Roberts at the time of the 1992 reopening. Know its location? (Answer below at the end of the board listings.)

. (Photo by Doug Hargis)

## MISSION INN FOUNDATION – MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission Inn Foundation preserves, interprets and promotes the cultural heritage of the Mission Inn, Riverside, and the surrounding Southern California communities through its museum services, educational programs and outreach activities. The Foundation was formed in 1976 to preserve the public trust in the Mission Inn, a privately owned National Historic Landmark.*

**DOCENT COUNCIL, 2009 – 2010:** Mel Gutierrez, Chair; Jim Ferguson, Vice-Chair; Kathy Chennault, Secretary; Michele Lufkin, Dauris Slaughter, Merwyn Schwartz, Jo Turner, Chuck Gonzalez, Doug Hargis, Joan Hayes, Sue Bartel, Carolyn Davidson, Ursula Dube, Patricia Marlow, Tom Martin, Robyn Rogers, Past Chair. **COMMITTEES – CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Robyn Rogers, Chair; Jerry Gordon, Doug Hargis, Nanci Larsen, Steve Lech, Joyce Lyons, David St. Pierre, Merwyn Schwartz, Deane Wylie. **DOCENT ROSTER:** Jim Ferguson, Chair; Jacci Barnes, Ursula Dube, Joan Hayes, Robyn Rogers, Dauris Slaughter, Robyne Williams. **HISTORIAN:** Doug Hargis, Chair; Jacci Barnes, Sue Bartel, Carolyn Davidson. **INN-LAWS/POLICIES & PROCEDURES:** Robyn Rogers, Chair; Jacci Barnes, Sue Bartel, Jim Ferguson, Joan Hayes. **MENTORS:** Merwyn Schwartz, Chair; Sue Bartel, Ursula Dube, Joyce Lyons, Jane Morabito, Dauris Slaughter, Jo Turner. **INNSIDER NEWSLETTER:** Tom Martin, Chair; Dan Hantman, Doug Hargis, Jane Morabito, Dauris Slaughter, Deane Wylie. **PEER REVIEW:** Dauris Slaughter, Chair; Sue Bartel, Barbara Burns, Jean Digati, Ursula Dube, Ann Greule, Dan Hantman, Jo Turner. **RECRUITMENT:** Kathy Chennault, Co-Chair, Jim Ferguson, Co-Chair; Mariela Anguelov, Chuck Gonzalez, Anne Greule, Doug Hargis, Nancy Kim, Sharyl Lee, Pat Marlow. **SPECIAL EVENTS:** Dauris Slaughter, Co-Chair, Sue Bartel, Co-Chair; Barbara Burns, Gretchen Cheney, Brightie Dunn, Joan Hayes, Joanne Hershey, Michele Lufkin, Joyce Lyons, Jane Morabito, JoAnn Schwartz, David St. Pierre. **SUNSHINE:** Michelle Lufkin, Chair. **TRAINING:** Jo Turner, Chair; Cora Lee Brown, Jerry Gordon, Dan Hantman, Steve Lech, Walter Parks, Robyn Rogers, David St. Pierre, Dauris Slaughter; Barbara Burns, coordinator. **MIF STAFF:** John D. Worden, Executive Director; Steve Spiller, Museum & Collections Manager; Emily McEwen, Curator of History; Virginia Fesunoff, Director of Marketing; Nanci Larsen, Director of Audience Development & Administration. **PART-TIME STAFF:** Sharla Wright, Museum Store Manager **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Chuck Krieger, President; Kathy Wright; Executive Vice President; Dell Roberts, Secretary; Bill Carter, Treasurer; John Brown, President-Emeritus; Kathy Allavie, Richard Anderson, Judith Auth, Chuck Beaty, Liz Cunnison, Ann DeWolfe, Charles Field, Teresa Hanley, Amy Harrison, Randall Hord, Brian Jaramillo, Ray Maghroori, Mike Marlatt, Walter Parks, Kerry Pendergast, Janice Penner, Holly Redfern, Kelly Roberts, Bill Rose, Mark Rubin, Ruthan Smith, David St. Pierre, Ofelia Valdez-Yeager, Doug Wible, Bill Wilkman, Mike Gardner, Ex-officio; Jeannene Kelly, Sharla Wright, Ex-officio; Mel Gutierrez, Ex-officio-Docent Council; S. Sue Johnson, Emeritus status; Jonathan O'Neal, Emeritus status.

[Where is it? Spanish Wing, second floor]

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The MISSION INN MUSEUM is open daily 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Museum phone: 951-788-9556; Office, 951-781-8241; Fax, 951-341-6574; [www.missioninnmuseum.com](http://www.missioninnmuseum.com) - E-mail, [info@missioninnmuseum.com](mailto:info@missioninnmuseum.com)