



MISSION BELL

Vol. 7, No. 3 / Fall 2018

Ring in the News of the Preservation Campaign for Mission San Antonio de Padua

SAVE THE DATE!

Evening in the Garden

Saturday, November 3, 2018

from 5:00pm to 8:00pm



THIS SPECIAL EVENT provides an enchanting opportunity to sample local wines while enjoying specially prepared gourmet food in an exclusive Wine Makers Dinner.

This year's event is open to 25 couples and includes dinner with a private chef, wine pairing with dinner from 4-6 wineries, gift basket, a private classical guitar concert by Ray Ruessner, overnight stay in the Mission Retreat Center, and continental breakfast on Sunday. The cost is \$500 per couple.

On **Sunday, November 4th** the Mission Gift Shop will be hosting an Open-House to introduce their new Christmas items. Many of the artists who consign their work to the Gift Shop will be on hand to meet people and answer questions while they showcase their unique pieces of art.

A Message from President AL PAROLINI

Entering the 1900's, at the turn of the century, all that remained of the once thriving Mission San Antonio de Padua was the abandoned stone church with a collapsed roof and portions of adobe walls of the Mission's quadrangle. During the period spanning 1948 to 1951, under the direction of Harry Downie, the mission was resurrected. For the ensuing seventy years, it has served a significant number of various individuals, groups and soldiers, as each traveled to this unique place to learn about history, attend religious services, or like myself looking for that something special which was missing in their individual lives.

My first experience exploring Mission San Antonio was in the fourth grade, with a bus load of children who traveled from our rural elementary school to complete our early California history studies of the California missions.

I returned in 1995 as part of a men's retreat; a group of men who were examining their lives, attempting to determine their purpose, seeking to find their way, with a strong desire to grow. The solace and isolation of Mission San Antonio allowed us to look within, reflect on the past, understand the present and prepare for the future.

Mission San Antonio is on the National Register of Historic Places list, a California Historical Landmark, a parish church, a retreat center, a historical archaeological site, a place for students to learn and artists to capture, for youth groups to gather, for the military to reflect before deploying to war, and for the community to gather and celebrate. It is a special place for many, with visitors from all over the United States.

I believe it was writer and philosopher George Santayana, who wrote—"those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." Let us never forget our heritage, as it plays an extremely important part of our state's early formation.

As we continue to reach out to the greater community – seeking financial support to ensure that this Mission will not be forgotten – we continue to have faith and hope, recognizing that all things will be accomplished in its correct time.

Thank you for your continued encouragement and support. ■



View north of church and part of Convento during construction, ca. 1949 (image from Mission San Antonio Archives)

What's new at Mission San Antonio? An update from Joan Steele



Pete Vachek painting the west interior wall of the church.

MISSION SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA once enjoyed the presence of thirteen hundred Salinan people, two padres, and four to six soldiers (depending on the year.) Today, two hundred and forty-seven years later, we claim about sixty-nine registered parishioners (ten under the age of ten), most of whom are seniors living on fixed incomes. I often say, we are small but mighty!

Thanks to the support and donations from the greater Mission Community, we have managed to raise funds to complete about three-fourths of the seismic stabilization/restoration project.

Even while we've been on a construction hiatus, we have been moving forward in small steps.

Pete Vachek has continued to work on the internal painting restoration. Sometimes I begin to think that this immense project will have Pete feeling like Michelangelo when he was painting the Sistine Chapel. I'm almost tempted to ask Pete repeatedly, "When will you be done?" just so I can hear him reply, "I will be done when I am done!" This is a really large Mission and although Pete may feel he'll never finish, he has made remarkable progress on keeping up with the project!



Restoration painting vs. painting that's 68 years old.

The library-to-art gallery/reception room project has also made exceptional progress. July 23-27, 2018 saw the carpeting removed from the room and the newly created, hand-made Mexican tile installed. Within the next few weeks the artisan chosen by the California Missions Foundation will arrive to add a wainscoting to the room. He will paint the wainscoting onto the walls, utilizing the three muted colors displayed in the corbels and the geometric pattern exhibited in the baptistry of the church.

Next, attention will be directed to furnishing the room and displaying the artwork. This project is being made possible by two generous grants from the Francis K. and Charles D. Field Foundation.

The Padre's Garden is always a changing pallet of color and texture. As the hot summer sun heats up our days to triple digits, repeatedly, the vibrant colors of the hollyhocks wane and the plants go to seed. The sunflowers offer up their bright yellow faces to their namesake as the bumble bees buzz around their petals.

The roses continue to offer an explosion of color, not unlike the fourth of July fireworks. Lady bugs and praying



Rose bushes are still exploding with color.



The original Mallorcan Mission grape stock is still producing luscious fruit.

mantis labor in the garden, trying their best to keep the pests at bay.

The lavender sways gently in the afternoon breeze, awash with watercolor brushstrokes of gentle violet hues emitting a relaxing scent as the honey bees busily work among their blossoms.

Life began in a garden...and thanks to the dutiful work of Babette Smith, our loyal gardener extraordinaire and her occasional volunteers, life continues at the Mission garden.

Won't you come for a visit... and maybe stay awhile? ■



A honeybee gets up close and personal with a sunflower.



Hollyhocks in bloom are a definite draw for the bees.



A praying mantis diligently searches the rose leaves for insect pests.

Rome Wasn't Built in a Day

By Joan Steele, Mission Administrator

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY.

In Egypt, it took decades to build each pyramid.

Award winning athletes spend years training before they stand on the podium and receive the accolades.

Building something that lasts takes more than a moment of effort and is well worth our time and attention. The same can be said of California's historic Missions. For fifty-four years (from Mission San Diego's founding in 1769 to the founding of the twenty-first Mission San Francisco Solano in 1823) the Franciscan Order worked to build Christian Communities in a New World. These Spanish Colonial Missions stand today as a testament to the courageous friars who travelled across oceans to spread the Good News and to the hard work and fortitude shown by both the friars and the Native Peoples, by wresting lasting structures from the very dust of the ground.

Following secularization in 1834, most of the Spanish Mission buildings suffered major neglect and rapidly fell into disrepair and destruction. A revival of interest in these historic structures and the integral part they played in our California (and National) history took place in the early 20th century and led to various levels of shoring up, repair and/or rebuilding. We owe a debt of gratitude to the individuals who recognized the historic importance of the Missions and acted to preserve them for our generation.

Mission San Antonio experienced a major restoration during the years of 1948-1950. The Church was repaired and the three wings of the quadrangle were rebuilt. For just over fifty years the Mission served as a school for Order Novices

and a Franciscan Retreat Center. In 2005, change again took place at Mission San Antonio as the Franciscan Order turned the stewardship of the Mission over to the Diocese of Monterey.

Anyone who lives in California, has relatives here, has visited, or watches the evening news, knows that life in California tends to get shaken up periodically. We experience earthquakes. That's a fact of life in California. Ever striving to better protect human life, the State of California issued a mandate that requires every non-reinforced building with public access to be seismically retrofit as a prerequisite to remaining open to the public. The Mission is no exception.

The community of Mission San Antonio de Padua embraced this \$12 to \$15-million-dollar-undertaking, breaking ground in August, 2014. The project has been eye-opening, educational, frustrating and rewarding. In four short years we have completed approximately seventy-five per cent of the job. Four years ... mere moments when viewed through the lens of history.

We are not, however, finished. Construction costs continue to rise. We are still hard at work raising the additional \$3 to \$5 million dollars we need to complete the ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliancy factors and necessary plumbing repairs and upgrades for the north retreat wing (Phase IV). We also need to complete the seismic stabilization, electrical and plumbing restoration, etc. of Phase V, complete the civil work required in the Padre's Garden and the south expanse of the property beginning in front of the facility, encompassing both interpretation and protection of the archeological ruins that give us a critical historical footprint of the site.

This is an exciting time to be alive! We are presented with a unique opportunity to play an integral part of saving a historic treasure. Not just one that tells us about our past, but one that continues to serve the greater community today, and with your help, tomorrow.

Won't you please consider joining us in this truly worthwhile venture?

Rome wasn't built in a day... neither was the Mission. It took many, many adobe bricks and many, many hands to build these buildings. We can honor the hard work and dedication of the original builders by stabilizing, restoring and maintaining the entire facility and historic site to the best of our abilities. Please spread the word ... invite everyone you know to be part of this exciting mission. Our good and responsible stewardship will guarantee that this very special place continues to serve the community for countless future generations. ■

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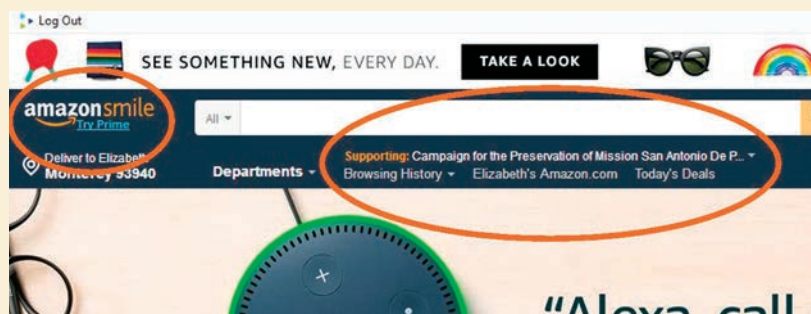
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