



MISSION BELL

Vol. 12, No. 2 / Fall 2023

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

A Message from Interim Campaign President

MICHAEL LUGO

Dear Community Members,

In this issue of the Mission Bell, I would like to share with you a visitor's impression of Mission San Antonio de Padua. This letter and photo from Reverend Sandy Brown touched my heart and reminded me of how impressive, peaceful, and meaningful this beautiful mission is to so many.

"My first visit to Mission San Antonio de Padua was by bike. I'd arrived at Jolon and set up my bed at St Luke's Church there, thanks to the members of the congregation. I enjoyed a shower and rest, then decided to make my way to the Mission. Along the way I saw signs describing values of the US Army, like "loyalty" and "honor" posted there to remind soldiers how to uphold the best of what it means to represent our

country. I turned left toward the Mission and made my way towards the buildings and at the end of the driveway I was overcome with a sense of peace. There were sounds only of nature and of someone in one of the retreat rooms playing sacred music on the flute. I sat under the enormous tree in front of the bell wall, looked out over the valley, and began to

meditate on nature, the Native Americans, the friars and priests, and the miracle that allowed these beautiful grounds to exist centuries after the construction. The next year I came back for the Good Friday service and will always remember the hospitality of Church community there and the serenity of the chapel and interior quadrangle. I've come to believe that Mission San Antonio de Padua is the spiritual center of the string of California missions because of its connection with nature, it's quiet and its community. It is a place of rest and peace that heals the soul." ■



The statue of St. Junipero Serra watches for the arrival of visitors and guests.



Casey Page Photography

12 Foot Iron Oak Tree Sculpture Installed at Mission San Antonio

IN OCTOBER 2023, local artist Max Randolph Studios installed a custom 12-foot-tall sculpture of a great oak tree in the historic courtyard of Mission San Antonio de Padua. The Mission commissioned Randolph to build the sculpture in honor of the many donors who donated to support the Mission's recent retrofit.

Max Randolph was raised among Paso Robles' iconic oak trees, and like many locals is fond of their majestic presence throughout the county. "When the Mission asked for an oak tree sculpture, I felt honored to be part of my local history. Oak trees and their organic wild shapes have lived in my imagination ever since I can remember" says Randolph. Randolph worked closely with the Mission to design a sculpture that would commemorate the donors and the history of the Mission.

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Iron Oak continued from front page

Randolph began the construction of the Iron Oak sculpture in December 2022, and completed it in October 2023. The sculpture is made from thousands of pounds of hand-forged iron, adorned with a canopy of copper leaves each formed by hand. "Working with sculptures of this size is truly a labor of love. This Iron Oak was a welcome challenge" says Randolph.

The copper leaves are hand-stamped with individual donor names. Donors who supported the Mission's retrofit in the amount of \$5,000 or more, have a designated leaf on the tree with their name, as well as leaf to take home. 805 Custom Woodworks, another local artisan, created special old-growth redwood shadow boxes to frame the donors' leaves, enabling them to showcase them in their private homes or offices.

The sculpture not only honors significant financial donors, but also the three groups of the Salinan Tribe, inscribed on the three tree branches of the tree:

- The Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties
- The Salinan T'rowt'raahl Community
- Xolon Salinan Tribe

Located on 86 pristine acres, Mission San Antonio de Padua sits within the "Valley of the Oaks" on California's scenic Central Coast. The Iron Oak now resides within the historic walls of the central courtyard garden, among the native plants, historically used by the Salinan Tribal Members, and the parish roses. Water falling from the central fountain, complete with fish swimming in the cold water, completes the peaceful ambiance.

"The completion of this sculpture is the crowning achievement of a seven-year, multi-million-dollar project to seismically strengthen and restore this historic jewel for another century of visitors and guests," says Joan Steele, Administrator of the Mission. "Max has, from 'Day One', intrinsically understood and captured the essence of this momentous undertaking. He has highlighted the people with whom the Mission began, the Salinans, and has paid homage to those who gave the substantial financial aid to make this monumental restoration a reality, all the while, authentically representing the importance of the area...the Valley of the Oaks."

The Mission is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday 10am to 4pm, and Sundays 11:30am to 4pm. Please come experience this unique place and this exceptional sculpture for yourself.

About Max Randolph Studios

Max Randolph Studios is an art studio located in Paso Robles run by Max Randolph, a blacksmith artist who designs and builds metal sculptures and moving architectural pieces. Driven by a passion for both fine art and craft work, Randolph has pushed the boundaries of metal with an insatiable curiosity and imagination for the last 20 years. ■

Seasons and Sight

By Joan Steele, *Mission Administrator and Campaign to Preserve Mission San Antonio de Padua Board Member*



Site where the original mayordomo house foundations remain to be discovered.

SHORTER DAYS AND CRISPER NIGHTS...the change of seasons is upon us. The long, hot days of summer are waning and the time of harvest is once again here. We are prompted to review our summer achievements. What did we accomplish during those long hot summer days?

Here at the Mission, we did a LOT of clean up and maintenance! It takes an enormous amount of work to maintain a well-loved and cared for Mission. Eighty-six acres in constant need of attention! We mowed acres and acres...we weeded (70 fifty-five-gallon barrels from the quadrangle garden alone)...we repaired plumbing and electrical...we pumped sewage...reworked gravel roads...replaced aging security cameras, etc. We took down the small building located to the southwest of the Mission; thereby removing an unsafe liability and providing access to a much more historic foundation, of the original mayordomo's house from the 1800's, located beneath. Future archeological work in this area will reveal the expanse of that significant



Roofing tiles removed from the casita await repurposing as protection of the cemetery walls.



Area where the building was removed. Special care was taken to preserve the trees and to avoid any ground disturbance.

essence of the Valley of the Oaks in his beautiful creation, honoring those individuals who donated \$5,000 or more to our Retrofit/Restoration project during the years of 2014 to 2021, honoring this beautiful valley, and the Salinan People upon whose homeland the Mission was founded.

So much has been accomplished! So many people came together to complete what some thought was impossible!

It takes vision to achieve the impossible!

Helen Keller once said, *"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."*

What is the vision for the continuation of Mission San Antonio?

For the Mission to survive...for the Mission to be relevant to future generations, it must do more than pay homage to the past. It must maintain a vibrant community connection. Mission San Antonio is distinctive in many ways, but in two special ways it can offer on-going community relationships.

The first is through its retreat center. Mission San Antonio offers a very unique, sacred, retreat space. Available by reservation, the Mission provides a place of quiet, rest, relaxation...to individuals and groups looking for a place to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday, modern life. It delivers a safe place to slow down, reflect, and revitalize our lives.

To this end, we are turning our attention to two other areas of the Mission property for restoration.

The first is an area located to the north of the Mission, commonly known as the fiesta grounds. This area sits adjacent to Mission Creek and has been home to the Mission's Annual Fiesta for the past 65+ years. The pavilion needs a new roof and the rest of the building needs a remodel. Plans to provide classroom space will make this area more conducive to educational groups and archeological field schools. The trees in the fiesta grounds require some much-needed attention. We plan to address some civil work in this area to make the grounds more usable and accessible. In past years, this area has been used by Boy and Girl Scouts, Family 2 Family (foster care programs), Fifth-grade Science Camps, Diocesan Youth Day, Army Unit BBQs, and much more. This is a great space to demonstrate our vision for the future.

Another area where we are envisioning future community interaction potential is located in the southwest portion of our property...the location of the Mission's original vineyard. We are

structure, and aid in the accurate and historic interpretation of the site.

By the time this copy reaches print, we will have completed installation of our Donor Tree in the mission garden. Max Randolph has expertly captured the



The building was definitely showing signs of major distress and unsafe conditions.

just getting started on the investigation and documentation of this historic area. It is our intention to have magnetic soil surveys and ground-penetrating radar surveys conducted to document the original planting and irrigation design of what may be the first vineyard on the central coast of California. Once again, this Mission is unique in that it still has this historic area available and undisturbed, enabling scanning and documentation. Since we still have original grape stock on site, when we are ready to replant portions of the vineyard, we will ensure maintenance of



Conditions of the building became increasingly unhealthy and unsafe after a water disaster in 2014.

our historic integrity by using cuttings from this stock to repopulate the vineyard. This restoration project promises to be another multi-year project. It will involve multiple University schools (Archeological, Architectural, Agricultural, Viticultural, and Technological)...and numerous students for many, many years to come. They will be able to study here in this beautiful, natural, and historic setting.

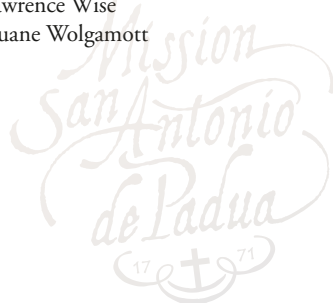
As the seasons change and the sun sets earlier, we find that we need to turn on lights to see. We don't, however, light up the whole world around us, like daytime. We light up the things we want to focus on. As Fall approaches, and our work outside needs to conclude earlier in the day, we are reminded that we need to choose what to focus our light upon. The same applies to the Mission's future. We need to focus our light, our sight, on areas of restoration that will ensure that we remain vibrant and relevant to our greater community.

The mandated work of the seismic retrofit is complete. Now we turn our vision to our future. We set our sights on the work that needs to be done to enable us to offer valuable interactive experiences for future visitors and guests...our new *friends and future supporters!*

Please continue to support our shared *vision!* ■

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Founded by Fra Junipero Serra Circa 1771

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MISSION BELL *Fall 2023*

Meet the Board Directors

BOARD MEMBER JESSICA RODGERS

I feel truly privileged to serve on the board dedicated to preserving Mission San Antonio de Padua. My connection to this place is deeply ingrained, and I do not recall my first visit here; it's as if I've been coming here my entire life, always conscious of my ancestral ties to this place. The mission's sturdy walls have witnessed my growth, and I'm profoundly honored to contribute to the ongoing preservation of this magnificent structure. For my family and I, Mission San Antonio de Padua holds profound significance. My ancestors resided throughout the Santa Lucia region long before the Spanish arrived, eventually becoming known as the Salinan people, or the people of the oaks. The mission stands as a living testament to the history of the Salinan people and my own family. During my upbringing, my grandfather instilled in me the importance of remembering our forebears at Mission San Antonio de Padua,



Perfecta Encinales & Family at the Mission

although I didn't yet realize that some of them never left, resting eternally in the native cemetery. Understanding that the very walls around me were shaped by the hands of those who came before me and appreciating that the enduring

beauty and splendor of their crafts-manship has withstood the test of time. My great-great-great-great-grandmother, Perfecta Encinales, played a pivotal role in nurturing and revitalizing Mission San Antonio de Padua. Her legacy permeates the very walls of this mission, and we are fortunate to showcase one of her baskets in the museum today. Perfecta and her family's dedicated efforts ensured that the mission did not fall into disrepair and has endured to this day. It is now my privilege to follow in her footsteps and continue this legacy. ■

*Basket made by
Perfecta Encinales*



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