

# TIMKEEPER

2022

SPRING • SUMMER  
VOLUME 4 NO 2





MISSION

The La Jolla Historical Society inspires and empowers the community to make La Jolla's diverse past a relevant part of contemporary life.

VISION

The La Jolla Historical Society looks toward the future while celebrating the past. We preserve and share La Jolla's distinctive sense of place and encourage quality in the urban built environment. The Society serves as a thriving community resource and gathering place where residents and visitors explore history, art, ideas and culture.

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www.lajollahistory.org

Follow the Society on



Cover Image: Artist Gail Werner's Bird Dreams XXVIII Monotype is featured in Voices From the Rez Exhibition opening in June.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Lauren Lockhart

This summer, we are immensely proud to present *Voices from the Rez*, opening June 4, 2022. This exhibition features the work of ten Native American artists living on reservations in San Diego and Riverside counties and working across all media, from painting and sculpture, to fashion, narrative writing, and music. San Diego County is home to eighteen reservations – more than any other county in the United States – and to prolific and varied creative output of Indigenous contemporary artists working today. By amplifying the voices of these artists, we hope to elevate awareness of the Kumeyaay, whose ancestral lands LJHS sits upon, and their role in shaping and stewarding the land of La Jolla. There are a range of engaging public programs planned, including a reading with celebrated Cahuilla/Cupeño writer Gordon Johnson, a musical performance by renowned blues musician, Tracy Lee Nelson (Mataweer) (Luiseño/Diegueño/Kumeyaay), and an artist talk with accomplished public artist and LJHS Board Member Johnny “Bear” Contreras (Kumeyaay). The summer will also bring a busy season for education initiatives. LJHS is honored to be a San Diego Foundation Level Up grant recipient, which will

enable us to offer free summer camps to San Diego Unified School District students. This is in addition to our ever-popular Young Architects Program, and ongoing collaboration with *Outside the Lens'* photography program.

This past spring, we celebrated the triumphant return of the *La Jolla Concours D'Elegance* and the *Secret Garden Tour of La Jolla!* Thank you to all of you who attended, and in doing so, supported our ability to grow our education programs, offer free admission to exhibitions and access to our archive, and support historic preservation. Our deepest gratitude goes to the many dedicated committee members and volunteers who so generously contribute their time and talents to make these events successful and meaningful experiences for our visitors.

We appreciate those who contributed to our *Spring Appeal* fundraising campaign. Your support is essential to our goal of serving as a resource and gathering place where residents and visitors explore history, art, ideas and culture. If you haven't yet done so, you can give by calling the office or online at [lajollahistory.org](http://lajollahistory.org).

We are thrilled to announce new Board Member Johnny “Bear” Contreras, and welcome back Ann Craig, Nick Agelidis, and Meg Davis to our Board of Directors. Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude to all of the Society's Members—we look forward to seeing you at our exhibitions, events, programs, and activities often!

Lauren Lockhart  
 Executive Director

NEW AND RETURNING BOARD MEMBERS

*“Through years of connection to the La Jolla Historical Society I have developed a deep commitment to the community of La Jolla. This has enriched my life and helped to make La Jolla my home.”*  
 - Ann Craig

*“I am delighted to rejoin the La Jolla Historical Society's board. I know from my previous term on the board that they are a talented group of committed individuals. I look forward to working with them and the new management team to further the Society's goals of honoring and exploring La Jolla's past in a way that is relevant, appealing and informative for as broad an audience as possible.”*  
 - Nick Agelidis

*“I'm very excited to return to the board of the La Jolla Historical Society and be part of the wide array of activities we have planned from new exhibits to the Secret Garden Tour. As a longtime resident of La Jolla, I'm passionate about bringing La Jolla history to life through our educational programs and events.”*  
 - Meg Davis



Johnny “Bear” Contreras is an artist with a dedication to depicting his culture and the life around him. A member of the San Pasqual Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Contreras is a self-taught sculptor and creator who mixes the traditions of his culture with the contemporary design techniques of modern art. Born in San Diego in 1962, he was raised and still lives on the San Pasqual Reservation in Valley Center, where his band of Kumeyaay were forced to move over 100 years ago. Contreras has a multi-faceted studio arts practice, including printmaking and sculpture. His inspiration comes from his people and the reservation where he works from his home studio. A tribal elder, Contreras is a former Tribal Councilmember and current Cultural Committee member on the San Pasqual Reservation. He is also very active with surrounding communities and has been a board member for the California Center for the Arts, Escondido as well as being on the team to inaugurate the first Indigenous Peoples' Day at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park in 2021. Contreras' public art can be viewed at the University of California, San Diego; the US Grant Hotel; Poway City Hall; Native American Memorial, Plaza of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral, Los Angeles; Saint Stevens Church, Valley Center; Valley View Casino; Solanus Casey Center, Detroit, Michigan; and Cabrillo National Park, San Diego - National Memorial to Native Americans.

To observe their 95th and 50th birthdays this year both La Valencia and Hotel La Jolla are having special events and offering menu surprises in their restaurants as well as new looks for some of their décor. Stay tuned. Dowagers COULD talk!



La Valencia interior shortly after 1920's opening.

La Jolla Historical Society postcard collection



Carol and Nanook visiting La Valencia, March 1, 2022

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Summer House Inn in La Jolla Shores, is 50. La Jolla Park Hotel, holding the record as the community's oldest hotel built at Girard Avenue and Prospect Street in 1893, would have been 129 if the magnificent Gilded Age Victorian had not burned to the ground three years after it opened. It stood at about the same location as today's Grande Colonial, built in 1928 and celebrating its 83rd birthday this year.

It is difficult to imagine life in La Jolla without our hotels. They give identity and stature to the community by merely being there. They add architectural integrity to the landscape. They create liveliness on the street. Guests may come from afar for soft pillows and hotel amenities. But locals enjoy them on an everyday basis as part of the heartbeat that goes with living in a Southern California community where the Pacific Ocean is the front yard.

I have never stayed in a La Jolla hotel, although I have lived in La Jolla for 57 years. Which is not to say I haven't enjoyed La Jolla hotels. How could a stroll into the LV's lobby with its grand picture window view of the Cove not be a treat? Or, be tantalized by some of this particular dowager's little secrets behind the autographed portraits of film stars hung for years by the reception desk, Greta Garbo and John Gilbert among them. La Jolla hotels, far enough from Hollywood to be a get-away from film studios, but close enough to be not more than a couple hours on the

road, were meccas for silent stars especially in the late 1920s. Later still, from the late 1940s into the 1950s, the crowd from Gregory Peck's La Jolla Playhouse frequented both the LV and the Colonial. Too bad hotels can't talk!

What we have with La Jolla hotels is a significant slice of history, most of it fascinating but some not so much so. Two of our hotels – the Casa de Manana which opened in 1924 with a design by architect Edgar Ullrich and the White Sands which began operation in 1955 – have segued into second lives as retirement facilities. Two others were victims of fire including, besides the La Jolla Park, the Wind 'an Sea Hotel which was built in 1909 and burned to the ground in 1943. And two more – the Cabrillo designed by Irving Gill and opening to guests with “electricity in every room” in 1908 and the Little Hotel by the Sea built in 1925 at the foot of Jenner Street – have been incorporated into the larger hotels that are their neighbors; La Valencia began operating the Cabrillo in 1958; the Grande Colonial added the Little Hotel to its campus about a decade ago.

To observe their 95th and 50th birthdays this year both La Valencia and Hotel La Jolla are having special events and offering menu surprises in their restaurants as well as new looks for some of their décor. Stay tuned. Dowagers COULD talk!

– Carol Olten  
 Editor



# VOICES FROM THE REZ



**Jamie Okuma**  
Oversized Butterfly Coat,  
Turtleneck, Culottes  
Neoprene, Poly/Elastine, Poly  
Smooth Lightweight Crepe

*Funding for this project generously provided by Patsy and David Marino; an anonymous donor; and the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. Institutional support provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture and by the Members of the La Jolla Historical Society.*



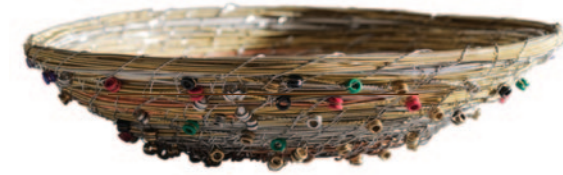
**Gerald Clarke**  
*Amul*  
Acrylic on canvas  
32" x 32"



**Gerald Clarke**  
*Branded print*  
Charred watercolor paper  
22" x 28"



**Robert Freeman**  
*Lady in Waiting*  
Acrylic  
30" x 48"



**Tracy Lee Nelson (Mataweer)**  
*Music Basket*  
Guitar strings, metal and plastic beads  
8" x 3"

By Dana Hicks

The La Jolla Historical Society is honored to present *Voices from the Rez*, an exhibition of contemporary art created by Native Americans from the reservations of Southern California June 4 – September 4, 2022. The medium for powerfully affirming the artist's voices is through painting, drawing, sculpture, fashion, beadwork, mixed media, narrative writing, song and performance. Southern California Natives live both on and off the Rez, where San Diego County is home to 18 reservations – more than any other county in the United States – upholding historic culture and traditions while concurrently inhabiting the modern world. In this exhibition, 10 artists reveal images, ingenuity, and unrestrained voices divulging their stories and communicating opinions through artistic expression. Works from these artists break through stereotypical barriers and open a path to share their strength, perspectives, and influential experience. Featured artists include Chuck Contreras, Gail Werner, Gerald Clarke, Gordon Johnson, James Luna, Jamie Okuma, Johnny "Bear" Contreras, Robert Freeman, Sandra Okuma and Tracy Lee Nelson.

Three accompanying programs during the exhibit will allow the public to meet the artists in person. Well-known San Diego artist and sculptor, **Johnny "Bear" Contreras**, will be in the gallery for an evening to meet and speak with visitors June 17. He states, "When I was around 18 my teacher said that learning about your People and the culture along with how it's been decimated will require understanding both worlds. At that time, I had no idea how insightful she was." Contreras is an artist with a dedication to depicting his culture and the life around him. A member of the San Pasqual Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Contreras is a self-taught sculptor and creator who mixes the traditions of his culture with the contemporary design techniques of modern art.

Writer **Gordon Johnson**, Cahuilla/Cupeño from the Pala Reservation, will read from his works July 10. His words like songs, Johnson has written three books and is a former newspaperman who worked as a feature writer and columnist. His books are *Rez Dogs Eat Beans, Fast Cars and Frybread* and *Bird Songs Don't Lie*. Johnson writes, "I believe in cultural expression. In finding the remarkable in everyday life – beauty in a pot of pinto beans and ham hocks simmering on a wood cookstove. I strive to put into words the feeling of living Indigenous."

**Tracy Lee Nelson (Mataweer)** who will be sharing his music for the evening of August 21 states, "If you're going to tell a story and tell the truth, the only way it's going to really come across powerfully and honestly is through the blues and so I started writing about the Natives' perspectives on the blues." Nelson is a former Tribal Chairman of the La Jolla Indian Reservation who has released nine blues albums. A blues legend in Indian Country, Nelson is Luiseño and Diegueño/Kumeyaay. He creates hard-hitting lyrics and music about Native blues such as *Uncle Sam, Natives No Respect* and *Commodity Blues*.

*Dana Hicks is a native of San Diego and has worked in museums, archives, and cultural centers for 30 years alongside Natives in Southern California. Her academic degrees include two Bachelor of Arts degrees, one in history and one in anthropology, a Master of Arts degree in history/public history and a PhD in history. Her dissertation involved survival strategies of the Luiseño, Cupeño and Kumeyaay in the mountains of San Diego County from 1846 – 1907. She serves as Deputy Director and Collections Manager of the La Jolla Historical Society.*

Photographs by Philipp Scholz Ritterman



# A Voice Like No Other

Johnny "Bear" Contreras  
*The Return of the Kumeyaay Creators*  
Aluminum, Resin  
65" x 60"

By Norra Belle Cardillo  
Photographs by Philipp Scholz Ritterman



Johnny "Bear" Contreras  
*I'm No Tonto*  
Resin  
12" x 22" x 21"



**N**ative voices have been speaking for thousands of years. In the past these voices have often been silenced, misunderstood, or misrepresented. Now – whether they are channeled through self expression, creativity, or art – modern Native voices are proudly speaking out and are finally being heard! One such voice bringing Indigenous stories to life is Johnny "Bear" Contreras. Johnny's artistic vision and sculpture has been selected for numerous public works projects and has received national acclaim. His work has been featured notably in the US Grant Hotel, the Valley View Casino, and on campus at the University of California San Diego.

I was honored to interview Johnny at his home studio located on the San Pasqual reservation (Rez). For Johnny, experiencing other artists' work had a profound impact on him and is an integral part of what propelled him to become an artist. After experiencing the master works of Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Michelangelo in person while in Rome, Johnny came to appreciate the transformative power that stories embedded into art can have. This was also a theme at the beginning of his career when he found himself deeply inspired by the life and work of Mexican Indigenous painter, Diego Rivera. These experiences led Johnny to want to do his own work which he said, "could represent different thoughts and dispositions of Native people currently." Johnny first started to work with paint and wood but later incorporated sculpture with the guidance of world-renowned Native artist, Robert Freeman, who encouraged Johnny to work with what he had in order to create sculptural pieces.

Listening to Johnny speak about his professional development while working with Freeman, who had been a friend of Johnny's father, I could see that this was a very transformative time for Johnny stylistically. For many artists, sculpture can be an overwhelming undertaking, but Johnny said Freeman had helped to make the medium approachable for him. The influence had lit a spark that burns in Johnny's work as a creator to this day.

The work which Johnny creates is thus – not simply his voice – but the shared voices of his community's experience.

I believe Johnny said it best when he said his works are "many Nation's voices." Federally recognized tribes are diverse and sovereign Nations with vast differences in languages, cultures, and sacred beliefs. Like many, Johnny has been dismayed with inaccurate depictions of Native representation in the past and felt that these portrayals in the media were vastly limiting. Johnny said that he felt the calling to create works that showcased what he said was "understanding that the world and nature have a lot more to offer than what

contemporary views open up to us." He said that this is an overarching theme in his work and finds himself "needing to bring that to life, whether it be as storytelling, sculpture and clay, or working in wood, metal, casting, reproduction, prints, or painting."

Whether Johnny is exploring creation stories, symbology, or cultural topics he builds a commonality between our past, present, and future. "We need to have more reverence for the natural world and to remember there was a time before now and there will be a time after," Johnny said. Not only do Johnny's concepts tell the stories of Native American people, but also of the land which we call home-stories which have often been dismissed. We can not change our American past but by holding reverence for our world and by seeking to value Native voices like those represented in Johnny's work, we make space for a more encompassing present and a vibrant tomorrow.

Experience Johnny's work in person at the La Jolla Historical Society's *Voices From The Rez Exhibition*, from June 4 - September 4, 2022.



Norra Belle Cardillo

Born in Southern California, I was raised on the stories of my ancestry, which were passed down to me from my grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Descended from both our land's Native people and settlers from distant lands, these stories shaped me into a woman of resilience with a passion for storytelling. I am a descendant of Comanche and old world European heritage. I grew up in Southern California until moving to Idaho where I lived and worked on the Rez supporting early childhood development for art and

athletics. I later moved off the reservation when I received a college scholarship to swim and to attend art school. Becoming a military wife later brought me back to California and reignited my passion for highlighting the American experience. As a communicator and artist, it has become my mission to illuminate the stories that shape our country as a way to preserve our national heritage.





# Raymond Chandler @ Me

By Gordon Johnson



## I was one of the lucky ones.

A Native who made it to college. In 1970, I slipped my copy of *House Made of Dawn* into a dorm room bookcase at

the University of California, Santa Cruz. From my third-floor window I surveyed new surroundings. Redwoods taller than a mission campanile, a quad teeming with book-toting students, a fortress of dorms.

At UCSC, Tim Hunter, a film teacher and friend, introduced me to Chandler, I dived in. We'd talk Chandler into the night over lapsang souchong laced with rum. Sometimes I'd play hooky from classes to read Chandler at the college pool. I remember looking up from "*The High Window*" to appreciate a leggy coed in a macrame bikini rinsing off in the outdoor shower.

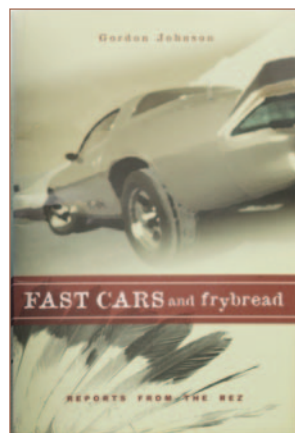
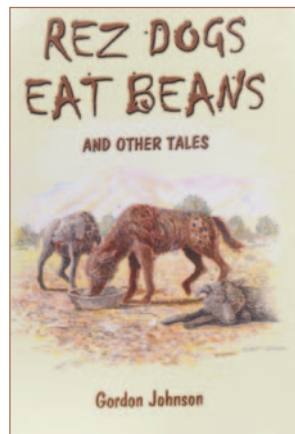
Under Chandler influence, I took to wearing a trench coat with a pint of Four Roses tucked into the pocket. I went to campus showings of "*The Big Sleep*." I smoked Camels lit with a Zippo lighter. I wrote Chandleresque short stories on an ancient Underwood in my smokey dorm room.

By contrast, I spent summers on the sun-baked Pala Rez. To earn pocket money, I joined the Pala fire crew attached to Cleveland National Forest. Once, at a two-week fire in Washington, I read "*The Little Sister*" twice in fire camp. It was the only book in my fire bag.

On the Rez, we got one snowy channel. I'd watch Perry Mason reruns with my grandmother, squint at boxing with my grandfather. Otherwise, I read. Mornings, I'd read for hours. Then I'd venture out

to see what the Happy Boys were up to: Grizzled Native war veterans sitting on stumps and orange crates, passing Thunderbird, the "more-horsepower" wine of choice. When drunk, they'd sing bird songs, punctuating rhythms with beer-can rattles. I soaked it all in, then returned to UCSC in the fall. The 1970s marked the awakening of Red Power and the American Indian Movement. I was a member of the Native student group where we dissected sovereignty and colonialism. Sometimes reading Chandler felt far afield from Native problems. Yes, reading him seemed a contradiction, a paradox. But it was too late for me. His style had influenced mine. I resolved to be a Native who evolved, not one consigned to a museum shelf. Good or bad, he set a tone for my life. He was my portal into an urban world inhabited by: "A blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained-glass window" ("Farewell, My Lovely"). But the gin-soaked woman in that same story would have fit right into my Rez world. It helped me realize people were people, and I could fit into both worlds.

Chandler had a literary voice as distinctive as Mark Twain or J.D. Salinger. He wrote eight novels, many adapted to film. He touched millions of lives. He certainly touched mine. From various accounts he was a cranky alcoholic who alienated many. But not me. He died at 70, in 1959. When buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, San Diego, 17 people attended his funeral. Always wished I had been one of them.



# DYLAN HAGER ...DRAFTING A BEGINNING

Seven years ago, in the summer of 2015 before my junior year of high school, I knew, in theory, exactly what I wanted to do for a career. I had been passionate about the idea of architecture for years, but I had a small problem. No one in my family, or anyone I even knew was an architect. My experience with the profession was next to nothing. That was finally going to change. My mother had heard about the La Jolla Historical Society's Young Architects Summer Program, and I excitedly asked to sign up. What happened over that week would change my life forever.

Led by the amazing Laura DuCharme, the camp explored all different facets of architecture. We learned how to sketch, how to draft plans, the design process, and we toured inspiring architecture both historic and contemporary. By the end of the week, I knew that architecture was right for me. Fast forward a few years. After attending the camp again the following year, I got into architecture school at the University of Oregon, a five-year program from which I expect to graduate this June.

Outside of school I have explored other avenues for my passion. In 2020, when the world stopped because of COVID-19, I spent the summer at our family's cabin in the town of Julian, constructing a small retreat that I have fondly named "The Prospect". The following summer I interned at Bennett and Remen Architects in La Jolla, another group of people who helped start and run the Young Architects Summer Program.

In fact, my connection to the program did not end when I went to college. Ever since the summer of 2018, I have been volunteering at the camp. This has been a hugely rewarding and educational experience. There is nothing better than sharing your passion with new people and seeing it grow within them. I cannot count the number of people I have met, and experiences I have had, through the *Young Architects Summer Camp*. It truly changed my life and I always look forward every summer to meeting a new group of young students and sharing my passion for architecture with them.

Dylan Hager's retreat as he designed and built in Julian



### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Legendary detective writer Raymond Chandler spent the last 10 years of his life living and working in La Jolla before his death here in 1959, a year after his last novel, *Playback*, was published. His distinctive writing style continues to inspire writers such as Gordon Johnson who brings some of the similar deadpan dialogue and phrase dropping into stories and books such as *Rez Dogs Eat Beans* and *Fast Cars and Frybread*.

Johnson will read from his own work in a July 10 program at the La Jolla Historical Society as part of the *Voices From the Rez* exhibition at Wisteria Cottage. Here he writes about his debts to Chandler.



# CHASING THE LIGHT

Charles Fries still life sketch, c.1920



Charles Fries sketch of San Diego back country, c.1910

By Carol Olten

Charles Fries spent the better part of his life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries painting in the California outback experiencing first-hand the rugged terrain of towering mountains, the sunlit ripples of light on streams, the changing moods of deserts from sunrise to high noon and twilights. Nature was not always as kind to him as he was to it with his paintbrush. On a plein air expedition to Yosemite in 1901, he left San Diego with four teams of horses, wagons and camping gear. He returned broke, suffering from encounters with poison oak and had sold his rig for food money. But in his memoirs, he recorded “three glorious weeks, resting, hiking, trading with soldiers and Indians; also sketching and painting the likes of Half-Dome, Bridal Vale, Cathedral Spires, Vernal and Nevada Falls (and) . . . bears.”

The Yosemite paintings comprised the first real work that Fries was able to find an audience for in San Diego and they launched his reputation as one of California’s significant figures in the growing school of plein air painters that was to include artists such as Alfred Mitchell and Maurice Braun. Before his death in 1940, Fries

(pronounced “freeze,” not “frys”) had catalogued 1,721 oil paintings – mainly landscapes painted on site of mountains and deserts in San Diego County but also including a handful of seascapes executed along the beaches of La Jolla. In the process, he made innumerable sketches, some lost, some in collections and some still turning up on the art market.

The La Jolla Historical Society recently acquired a fragile sketchbook of Fries free-hand drawings, a gift from Barry Ruderman Antique Maps Inc., which had acquired them as surplus collectibles in an auction sale. The sketches reveal subjects more alien than the normal Fries subjects of nature in the wild. Although one shows the exterior of a rustic structure in the outback, three others personify Fries working in a more domestic mode: A still life with a table stacked with books shown under a decorative wall sconce and two exteriors of cottages lushly surrounded by plant growth, the latter quite possibly sketched in La Jolla. No records exist identifying the settings or if Fries ever carried the work into the next step of actual paintings.

Fries memoirs, written late in his life starting at the age of 80 and

now in the collections of the San Diego History Center, testify to his hard work as an artist and attempts to survive with a paintbrush and easel in a natural environment that often bordered on hostility. On trips to the Lagunas and Warner Hot Springs he braved earthquakes and rattlesnakes. Climbing a mountain near Jacumba, he came upon a cave – out of which sprung a lioness and two cubs. Camping on a painting trip in the San Felipe Valley, a wind and rainstorm pelted his campsite for two days and two nights as “winds from the sea and desert met and had a duel.” Above Dulzura, a dust storm almost destroyed a canvas, although Fries confides on an optimistic note, “I brushed off all I could and it produced a wonderful fog effect.” He also had run-ins with horse thieves, nomads and “queer ducks” choosing to live eccentric lives in solitary, ramshackle dwellings in forsaken territory of old mines and ghost towns.

But to Fries finding the perfect light and spot for a painting was almost always the final reward. He recalls discovering Hidden Springs Canyon in the mountains in back of Mecca where “there is a spring that feeds a clump of palms; by crawling on our stomachs for some distance through a natural tunnel, we finally came upon an opening such like the interiors of a cathedral – it was a wonderful effect.”

The painting became one of Fries’ most prized works which, along with other of his canvases today, commands prices in the five to eight thousand dollar range. His work is in collections at The San Diego Museum of Art, the Irvine Museum, the Laguna Art Museum and the former Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D. C. Fries received the silver medal in the painting category at the Panama-California International Exposition in Balboa Park in 1915-16. He served as president of the San Diego Art Guild in 1919 and was a founder of the La Jolla Art Association in 1918.

His early life was a long struggle to find a niche in the broad world of creative imagery. Born in Hillsboro, OH, in 1854 as the seventh of 11 children, Fries began work as a young man in Cincinnati as an illustrator and lithographer. He took painting classes on the side and by 1876 was eager to learn from masters in Paris. He travelled to England and Scotland but ran out of money before reaching the Continent and was forced to return home, but soon found work in New York, again serving as an illustrator. He married, but his wife’s health issues, led to the couples’ purchase of a farm in Waitsfield, VT, where Fries again was unsettled and unhappy. “I spent all my time painting cows,” he complained.

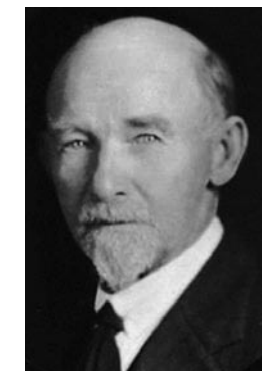
In the late 1890s, the Fries family moved to Los Angeles where they connected with the bohemian camaraderie of Charles Fletcher Lummis living in the Arroyo Seco. Lummis advised Fries he might find a

The Yosemite paintings comprised the first real work that Fries was able to find an audience for in San Diego and they launched his reputation as one of California’s significant figures in the growing school of plein air painters



La Jolla Historical Society Collection

home with free rent in the old San Juan Capistrano mission. The family moved into the dank mission quarters for a short time but soon opted for better surroundings in San Diego after their young daughter had a bout with typhoid fever. San Diego, Fries found, “was a quiet little town of 16,000 people and had that atmosphere of manana por la manana that appealed to us.” Fries bartered some paintings to



Charles Fries

Ulysses S. Grant Jr. for equal trade on some downtown lots which he resold at a profit, meanwhile, being able to build an adobe house on one of them at 2876 F St. which became known as the family home, Ivy Lodge.

And, from there for many years, he went on his painting expeditions often times accompanied by Edward S. Davis, an amateur anthropologist who did field work among Native American tribes of Southern California and the Southwest. Much of the world they discovered – rocky arroyos, mountain glens, secretive streams and rarified

atmospheres of blue skies pierced by peaks and pines or deserts shimmering in golden mists of dawns and twilights – now is obscured by freeways, suburban sprawl and shopping malls. Today these idylls of the past exist in Fries’ images of them.



# LOST FOUND:

# A Dragon on the Wane

By Carol Olten

The lure is most often the lore in the legendary world of La Jolla's Green Dragon Colony of the late 19th century. Green Dragon history, itself, often seems more storybook than real: Gregarious, well-liked German fraulein who loves children drives a carriage to an idyllic ocean site in 1894, becomes enchanted by what she sees, buys property along the cliffs and builds a dozen small "castles" – one a home for herself and the others for friends from all over the world who care (or dare) to drop in over the next several decades. Teas are taken. Music is played. Literature is discussed. Poems are written. And, like Edward Lear's proverbial Owl and Pussycat, the players dance by the light of the moon into the happily ever after once Beethoven, Wagner, Shakespeare, Swinburne and so on have their due.

Although numerous truly magical stories about Green Dragon and its kindly fraulein founder Anna Held have become part of the common lexicon, a true history of the bohemian settlement that once occupied the high, wind-swept ocean cliff known as Goldfish Point has never been written, much less published. The closest published work existing is a fictional biography, complete with imaginary dialogue, called "The Joyous Child," which traces Held's life from growing up in Berlin, passage to America to spread the Froelich method of childrens' education, associations with some of the Gilded Age glitterati as well as musical and thespian geniuses of the time in Europe and London, life at Green Dragon in La Jolla and eventual return to England where she died in 1941. "Joyous Child" was written by Havrah Hubbard, with Held contributing, and published in limited bound copies after completion in Lugano, Switzerland, in 1939. The 101 pages are hand-typed – not printed, making it more an account of a personal journey than a book for general reading.

But, wait, there now appears more fodder for foraging in a totally unpublished manuscript, of which at least one copy, rests in the archive of UCSD Special Collections. Entitled "Anna Held and Early Days at the Green Dragon," it consists of some 200 unbound pages, also hand-typed and also, like "Joyous Child," a literary hybrid of both fiction and biography. The narrative structure is set within a framework of a curious Green Dragon visitor identified as "Mrs. Denville" interviewing Held as she goes about her daily life at the camp (Held had originally named her settlement Green Dragon Camp and only after "Ships in the Night" author Beatrice Harraden visited was the name changed to Colony after a fictional setting in Harraden's book). The "lost" manuscript was among papers donated to the university by San Diego journalist and editor Neil Morgan after his death in 2014. Morgan's widow, Judith, isn't sure how it came into her late husband's hands beyond that people sometimes trusted him to pass information along to whoever might put it to good use. Although the manuscript is not signed, Olive Percival, a writer who had a similar operation to Held's Green Dragon in the Arroyo Seco

of Los Angeles, is believed to have been a significant contributor. (Percival also at some point drafted a manuscript entitled "My First Visit to San Diego and La Jolla" which featured Green Dragon commentary; it is among her papers at the Huntington Library.)

Curiously, a letter written to Held in 1921 by an anonymous critic named "Bill" urged her to discourage the UCSD manuscript's publication on the basis of being "a very heavy-footed and unimaginative presentation of what should and could be a most captivating and inspiring book." As a collector of Green Dragon lore myself and lured on by the discovery of Held's long-lost Olive Hap and Mishap dolls after a lengthy search a while back, I would tend to agree with "Bill." The manuscript trods along like a brick in need



The Outlook Cottage at Green Dragon Colony as it appears in vintage photo album of 1899

of wheels. Furthermore, the dialogue attempts to have Held speak English with a heavy German accent which is not only awkward, but embarrassing, considering the political climate it was written in between the two world wars.

The story opens with a first-impression of Held (identified as The Mistress) as formed by the poke-ish Mrs. Denville as she makes an initial visit to the Green Dragon, planning to stay in one of the cottages for the winter with one of her young sons: "The Mistress towered above the crowd. . . Her costume – well, it does not in this case make the woman. Her hat was one of those seaside hats from far Panama, Manila or Samoa, more comfy than handsome. Her shoulders were covered by a short, blue, military-looking uniform golf cape . . . Her voice...deep, sweet, soft and womanly, with the tones of an organ and the delicious accent of a foreign tongue trained . . . Her eyes – luminous, serious, merry and twinkling – were set deep in a head that at once suggested that of Beethoven."



Hand-tinted photograph of family enjoying the Den Cottage at Green Dragon, c.1900

(Beethoven? Now there is a reach!)

A "queer little train" had crept out to deliver the visitors from San Diego to La Jolla where, the author found, "the Pacific Ocean, with its various moods and tides, has made the rockbound coast curious and beautiful with caves and waterfalls; it has profiled the rocks into faces of men and animals and jeweled the beaches and waters with dainty shells and shining gold fish." But in walking down "the dusty, narrow road" to Green Dragon, the visitors became somewhat disappointed finding "grand eloquent names posted on very ordinary cottages, names larger than the houses such as 'Washingtonian' and

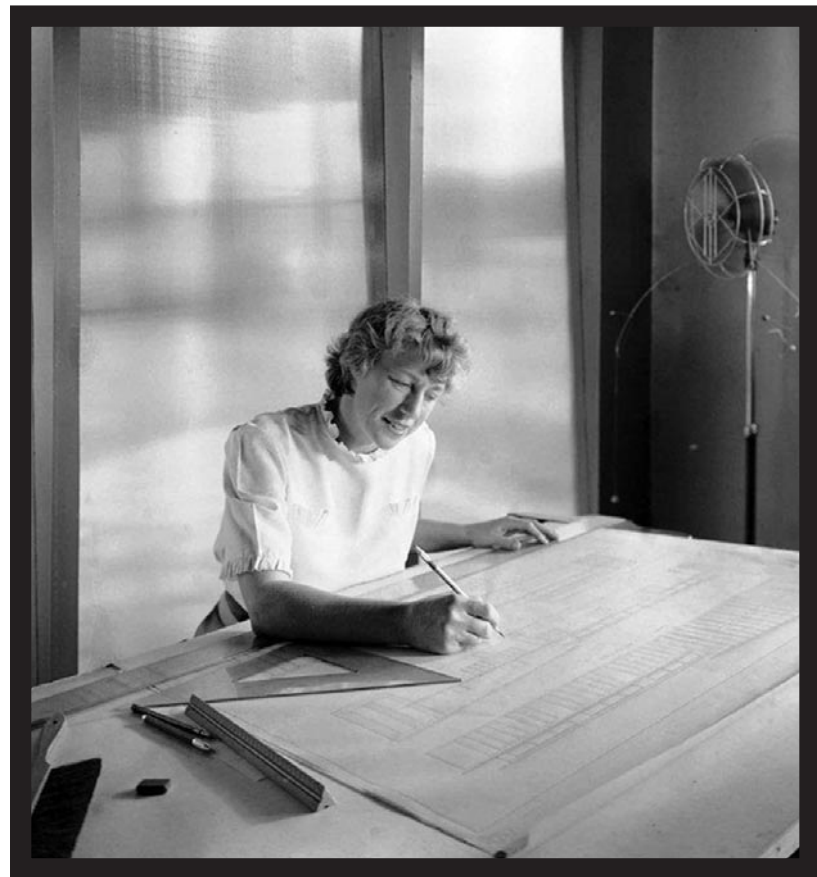
'The Breakers.' .they wondered if all the attractions of this new and dusty little place were over-advertised."

As the story progresses the Mrs. Denville interviewer dutifully questions The Mistress about all the people she has met in life with the tome of a schoolteacher asking for dates in a history lesson: Her marriage in 1904 to Max Heinrich, her life-long friendship with British Shakespearean actress Ellen Terry, her associations with the wealthy William Jackson Palmer family of Colorado Spring's Glen Eyrie, the Polish actress Madame Helena Modjeska, etc. In one chapter the inevitable subject of religion and theosophy comes up to which Held

...continued on page 15



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The architectural historian Esther McCoy played a significant role in bringing the work of pioneer California modernists to public attention through an extensive body of writings published in books, magazines and other periodicals. Her first major book was Five California Architects of 1960. A resident of Santa Monica, McCoy also was a major contributor to John Entenza's Art & Architecture magazine, often writing about its Case Study House program in post World War II Southern California. In 1962 her first edition of Modern California Houses was published, followed by a second edition under the title Case Study Houses 1945-1962 in which one of the featured project's is architect Edward Killingsworth's Triad on La Jolla's Rue de Anne (One of the Triad Houses recently was bequested to the La Jolla Historical Society for preservation in perpetuity.) Timekeeper presents an excerpt from McCoy's introduction to the second edition:*



Architectural historian Esther McCoy at drawing board, c.1950  
She once worked as a draftsman for Rudolf Schindler

“With wary nostalgia I recall that the Case Study House program began as a plan to protect modern architecture from the flourishing eclectics. But the modern movement was doing well; it had always done well in California from the time we had more or less inherited it from Chicago at the turn of the century. It evolved, to be sure; new forces were gathering even during the existence of the Case Study House program, and since then our sensibilities have undergone other changes.

Our vision of what a house is today (1977) is quite different. The outdoors and indoors need no longer merge; we are sure of the difference between interior and exterior as McKim, Mead and White were – or Irving Gill. Glass walls are not the only way to bring in light and sun; today light modifies, it defines, it surprises. (The modularity learned from the Japanese and beloved of Walter Gropius and three generations and still dying hard in the high rise) was raised to a principle and squeezed dry. Continuity was replaced with the broken line and broken form (with help along the way from Lou Kahn's servant and served spaces); then what was left of continuity was finally demolished in NASA. . .

The evolution of the house has not taken away the respect for the Case Studies. The architects who designed them could not be

called a “school” in a true sense, but they could be held together under one banner – the magazine Art & Architecture. By the end of the 40s, A & A was known and respected in Europe, Japan, South America and at home; it was the only magazine in the United States which devoted its pages exclusively to modern work – a word which underwent changes in meaning but was clear at the time; it might be Wrightian or Wurster or Harris or Corbu on Mendelsohn modern, but it was unmixed with eclectic.

Although more Neutra was published than Schindler, more Davidson than Lautner, more of the second generation Bauhausians than the second generation Wrightians (Wright's own work seemed to go automatically to Architectural Forum where he had a devoted friend in the distinguished art editor Paul Grotz), A & A was not narrow in its tastes. It was a shoestring magazine, as avant garde magazines have always been in the U.S.; there were long critical articles on a variety of subjects and excellent art and music criticism; the cinema was treated as an art form; buildings published were always good, sometimes experimental, and they were presented with very little text but as solutions to structural, site and social problems. While the older architects still preferred to be published in the eastern magazines, it was the ambition of the younger architects to be published in A & A; enough of them were so that the magazine kept fresh and youthful in tone. The magazine was just as important for what it omitted; a magazine can be influential because it is not something else – a fact one critic summed up in the complaint, “Arts & Architecture is only half the picture.” By the end of the 50s A & A was the whole picture, and now in the 70s it may still be one part of the picture.

The Case Studies opened a new chapter in the design of small houses – usually two bedrooms, always two baths – for families without servants. (The houses were prophetic of the 50s and 60s when servants disappear almost entirely.) Seldom in the U.S. had architects concentrated so much attention on the small single-family house as in the Case Study program. There was a belief popular at the time that a house was the architect's favorite type and that it was an invitation to be self-indulgent, also that architects preferred a single house to multiple housing. Roger Montgomery's chapter, Mass Producing Bay Area Architecture, (Bay Area Houses, edited by Sally Woodbridge, Oxford, 1976) is a better key to the attitudes of architects toward housing than was Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*. . . The Case Study program encouraged a body of work which it was hoped would turn the tide against the Anne Hathaway cottage and the salt box. . . By 1960 the custom-built family small house was being priced out of existence. The Case Study house was a social program; it essentially ended when the house became a luxury.”

– Excerpt from McCoy's introduction to her second edition of *Modern California Houses*.

...continued from page 13

*A Dragon on the Loose*



Anna Held with child at Green Dragon Colony, 1902

responds: “I do not care for religion as it goes now.”

Little expression is given to Held as truly one of the most fascinating women of her time with one foot newly planted on American soil and the other in the European sod of her youth during a time of immense social, political and economic upheaval.

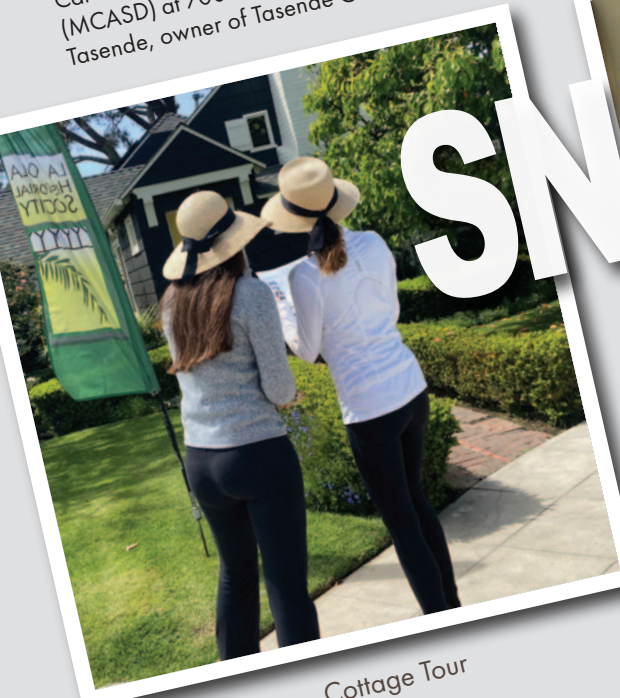
Her creation of the Green Dragon in La Jolla and its subsequent reputation as a bohemian haven for artists, intellectuals and occasional royals resulted both from personal enterprise and connections. She originally bought the cliff known as Goldfish Point and surrounding area above Emerald Cove for \$165. About 20 years later she sold a major portion of the land for \$30,000 and established a junior version of the colony slightly east of the original. In the unpublished manuscript there are indications that Held believed in living a la carpe diem and sometimes was supported by bequests from patrons to keep the place alive. On page 101, she laments to Mrs. Denville: “It iss with time as it iss with money: Always I borrow from Peter to Pay Paul and Vice Versa.” She also sometimes laments over complaining guests. When a potential renter asks if a roof leaks she scowls that the structure is designed so that you will feel to be living in the outdoors. But there are spiders?, asks another. “I nefer kill spiders,” Held declares.

Spiders or not, Green Dragon WAS a magical place of creativity and zeitgeist. It was inspirational to major influencers in literature, music and art from around the world – some of the prime shape shifters of the early 20th century. Held was the good heart of it, ringmaster and chief orchestrator. It's a truly great story – and deserves grander telling than snippets recorded in unpublished manuscripts that turn up in improbable corners.



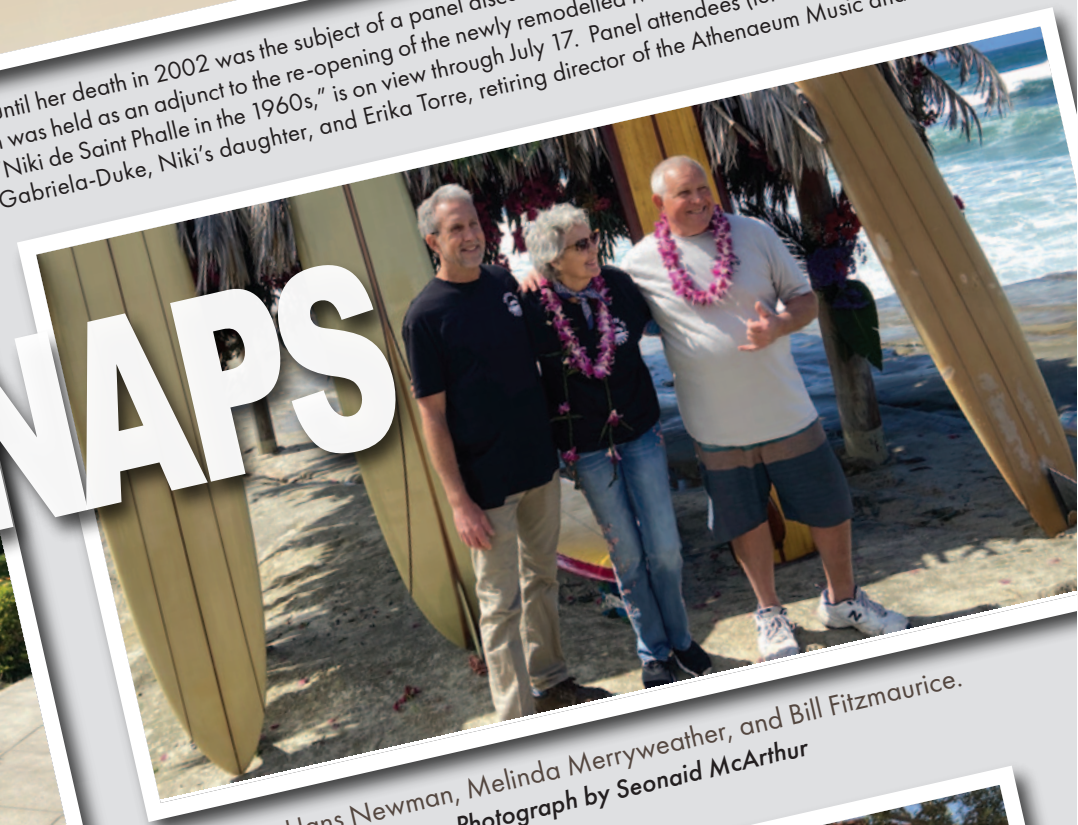


Artist Niki de Saint Phalle's life in La Jolla from 1993 until her death in 2002 was the subject of a panel discussion led by the La Jolla Historical Society's historian Carol Olten this spring in Balmer Annex. The program was held as an adjunct to the re-opening of the newly remodelled Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) at 700 Prospect St. where the exhibition, "Niki de Saint Phalle in the 1960s," is on view through July 17. Panel attendees (left to right above) were Jose Tasende, owner of Tasende Gallery; Olten, Laura Gabriela-Duke, Niki's daughter, and Erika Torre, retiring director of the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library.



Cottage Tour

# SNAPS

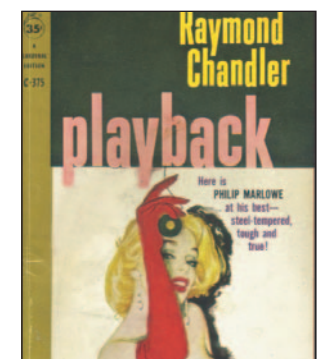


Hans Newman, Melinda Merryweather, and Bill Fitzmaurice.  
Photograph by Seonaid McArthur

A tour of two Cliff May houses, a 75th anniversary party for Wind 'an Sea's historically designated Shack and the presentation of Jewel Awards for preservation of La Jolla homes and buildings highlighted Landmarks Week this spring, an annual event presented by the La Jolla Historical Society's Landmarks Group. A selection of photographs (right and above) features participants at the various programs. Another popular activity this spring featured a catalogue signing and presentation on the Wisteria Cottage lawn held in connection with the Society's Memory Traces exhibition (left photograph).



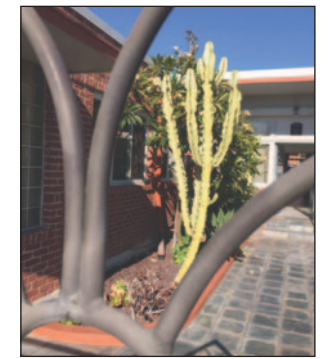
**June 4 - September 4**  
**Voices From the Rez**  
Exhibition  
Wisteria Cottage Galleries



**July 22**  
**Raymond Chandler's La Jolla**  
Guided walking tour  
Wisteria Cottage  
3pm



**June 16**  
**Storybook Houses of Barber Tract**  
Guided Walking Tour  
Darlington House,  
7441 Olivetas Ave  
3pm



**August 18**  
**Courts of La Jolla**  
Guided Walking Tour  
Wisteria Cottage  
3pm



**June 17**  
**Meet the Artist: Johnny "Bear" Contreras**  
Lecture  
Wisteria Cottage Galleries  
6-8pm



**August 21**  
**A Musical Evening With Tracy Lee Nelson (Mataweer)**  
Concert  
Wisteria Cottage Lawn  
6-8pm



**July 27 - July 4**  
**August 8 - 19**  
**Level Up SD Summer Program**  
Balmer Annex Classroom



**September 23- January 22**  
**The Smallest Show On Earth: Paper Theatre Explored**  
Exhibition  
Wisteria Cottage



**July 10**  
**Gordon Johnson: A Reading From His Works**  
Reading  
Wisteria Cottage Lawn  
6-8pm



**October 29**  
**Ellen Browning Scripps Luncheon**  
Speaker: Barbara Goldstein  
Former editor *Art & Architecture* magazine



# CONCOURS BACK ON THE ROAD

A crowd of thousands thronged Ellen Browning Scripps Park at La Jolla Cove Sunday, April 24, to mingle with Lamborghinis, Mercedes, Rolls Royces, Bugattis and many other prize-winning vintage vehicles participating in the *Concours d'Elegance* in a return after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Michael Dorvillier returned to chair the event which included a three-day weekend of programs besides the main car show sponsored by the La Jolla Historical Society. Photographs show some of the judges' top awards announced at the Sunday event.



BEST IN SHOW

Nethercutt Collection  
1931 Bugatti Type 51 Dubos Coupe



MOST OUTSTANDING PRE-WAR AWARD

Aaron and Valerie Weiss  
1933 Marmon Sixteen



MOST OUTSTANDING POST-WAR AWARD

Charlie Duvall  
1956 Mercedes Benz 300SL Coupe



LPL SUMMIT BEST OF MARQUE

Lilian McCain  
1936 Bugatti Type 57 Cabriolet by Graber



TIMELESS ELEGANCE

Jeff & Kim Phillips  
1936 Pierce Arrow Twelve Town Car



PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Jonathan & Wendy Segal  
1950 Alfa Romeo 6C 2500 Supergioello



# SECRET GARDEN TOUR

The La Jolla Historical Society's Secret Garden Tour was back in bloom this spring after a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing hundreds of garden lovers to view and enjoy landscapes, designer tabletops and music at the special invitation of private homeowners throughout La Jolla. The tour, again including the addition of a platinum house and a garden boutique on the Wisteria Cottage lawn as well as a Friday night soirée before the Saturday, May 14, event, featured a historic estate from the 1920s and a variety of homes and gardens from the Mid-Century years. Meg Davis and Lucy Johnson shared chair person duties. The Secret Garden Tour has been a major fundraising event for the Society since its inception in 1999.



Photographs by Meg Davis





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...and we have 30,000 of them!*

Ready for reproduction for use in home and commercial interiors, professional offices, educational institutions and retirement facilities. They range from snapshots of early La Jolla beach scenes to postcard pictorials of street life, buildings and landscape. Browse the La Jolla Historical Society website at [www.lajollahistory.org](http://www.lajollahistory.org) or call us at 858-459-5335 to visit our offices at 7846 Eads Ave. to make your selections.



Funding has been provided by California Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.



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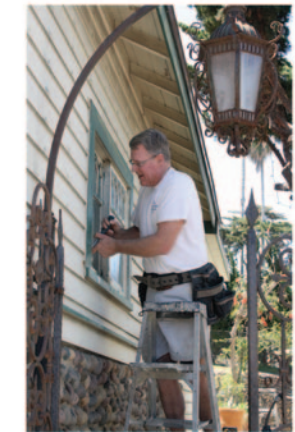
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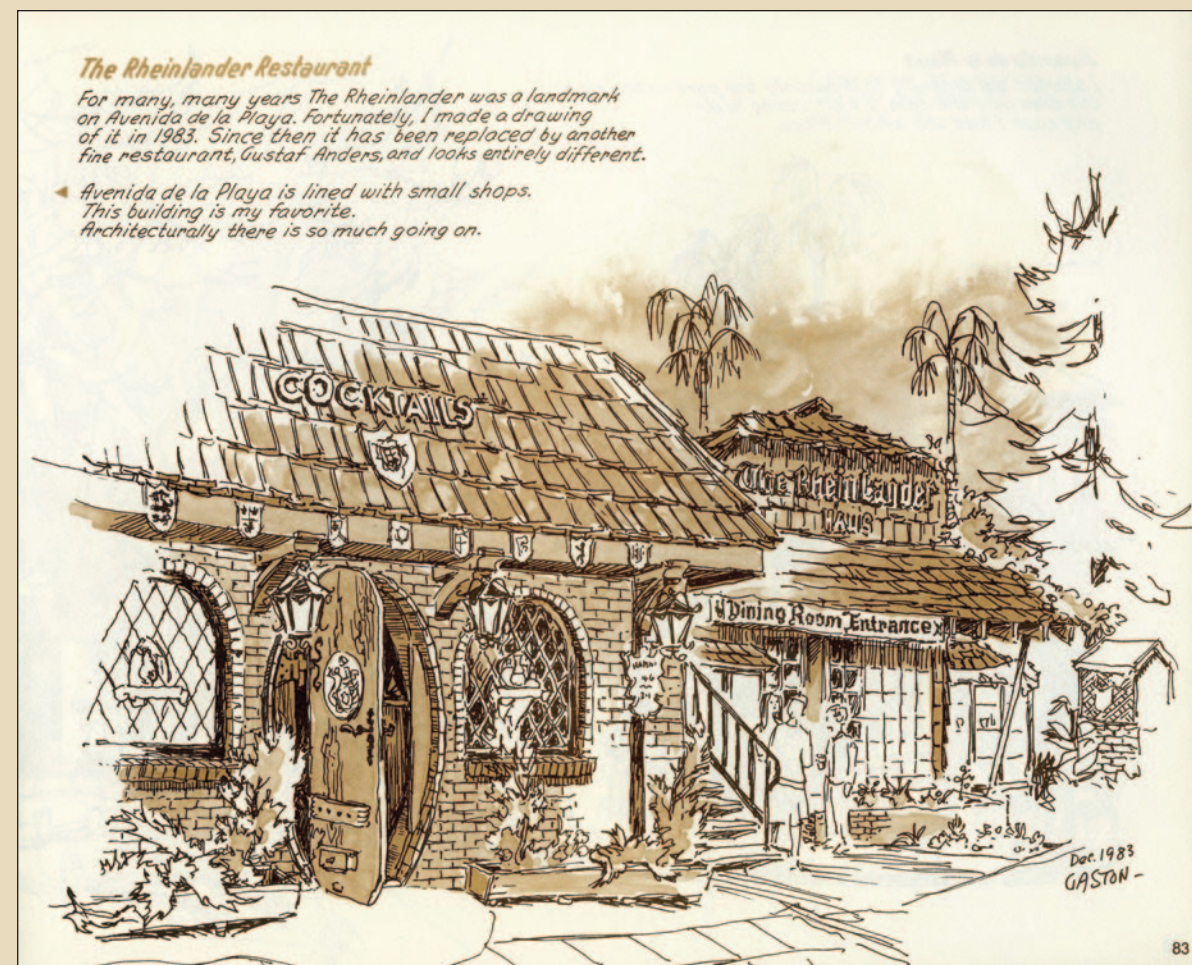
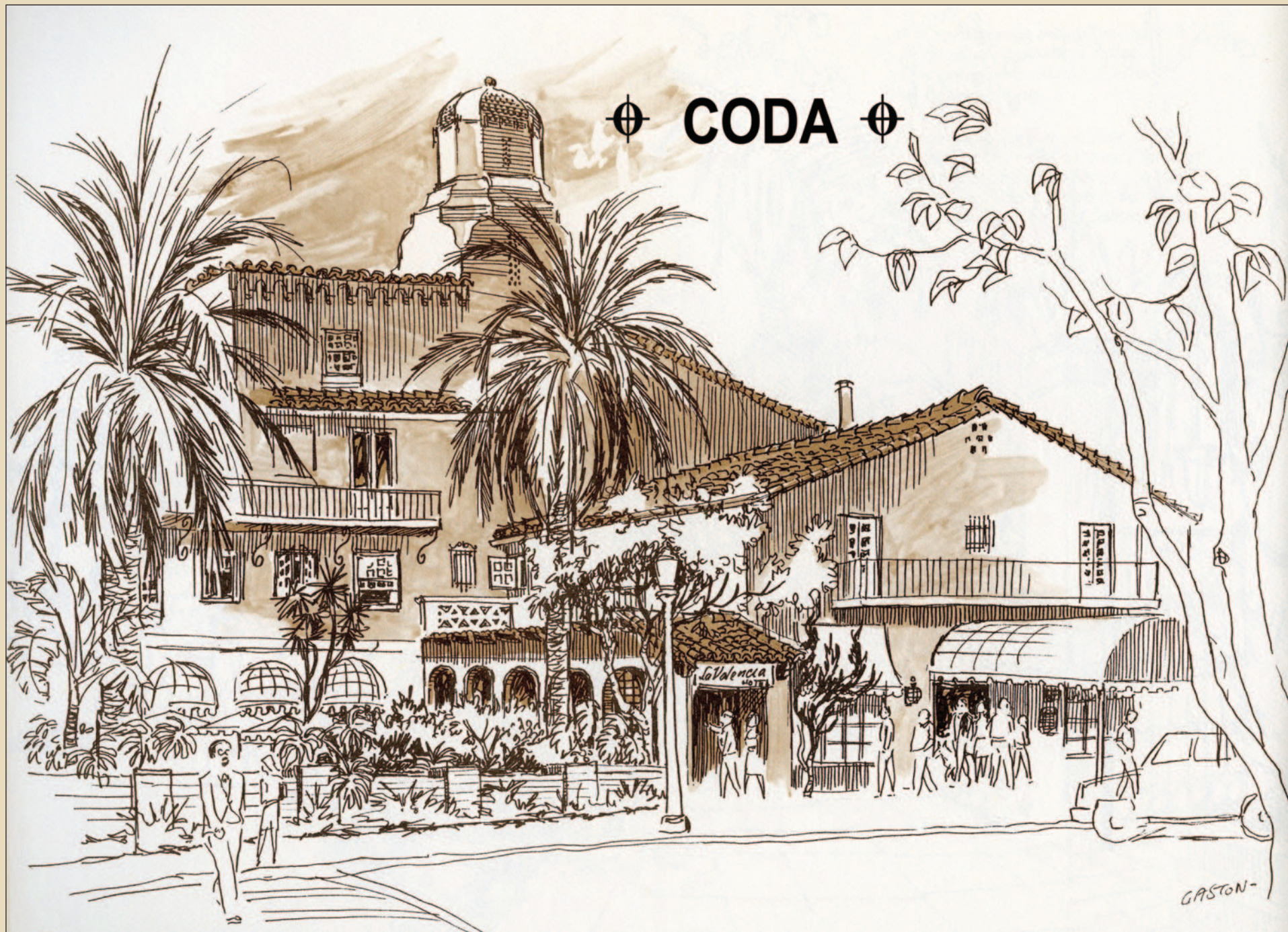
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**The Rheinlander Restaurant**

For many, many years The Rheinlander was a landmark on Avenida de la Playa. Fortunately, I made a drawing of it in 1983. Since then it has been replaced by another fine restaurant, Gustaf Anders, and looks entirely different.

◀ Avenida de la Playa is lined with small shops. This building is my favorite. Architecturally there is so much going on.



Gaston Lokvig

**THE DANISH MAN**

Slight of build with a pixie-ish grin, Gaston Lokvig could easily have been seen as an abscond from Copenhagen Tivoli Gardens as he darted around La Jolla with his sketchpad making pen-and-ink drawings of the street scenes and buildings that so delighted him here from the 1960s into the late '80s when he escaped to retirement in Santa Fe. Lokvig grew up in Denmark and, although he spent his life in the United States after moving to the East Coast in 1959, he remained at heart a Dane, delightful in both manner and appearance. He lived in a little brick house on Draper Avenue, had a graphic art studio on Pearl Street, rode a bicycle to the Cove every morning for a swim and sketched almost every day. In 1988, he published "Gaston's La Jolla," An Artist's View," a 96-page book of sketches recording anything from familiar sights on Girard Avenue sidewalks to new commercial courts that sprouted up here and there. "La Jolla keeps growing – at times a little too much – but I have tried to keep up with it," he wrote in the introduction. "One can spend a lifetime just sketching in La Jolla and never finish." A selection of Lokvig sketches are reproduced here. They are remarkable for detail as well as pictorial sensibility. Looking at the sketches decades later, it becomes hard to imagine that La Jolla once had so many trees!

ABOVE: La Valencia Hotel

ABOVE RIGHT: UCSD Library

LOWER RIGHT: The Rheinlander, landmark restaurant in La Jolla Shores





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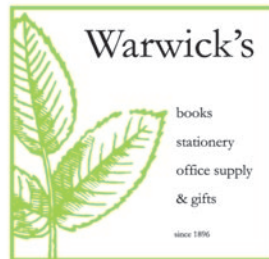
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