

Timekeeper



2023

FALL WINTER VOLUME 5 NO 3

LA JOLLA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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COVER IMAGE: Artist and children's book writer Cooper Edens created this image for "If You're Afraid of the Dark Remember the Night Rainbow" in 1979 for Green Tiger Press, the publishing company whose work and illustrations will be featured, along with Unicorn Cinema and Mithras bookstore, in Wisteria Cottage exhibition this fall.



Dear Members and Friends,
Just as the cloudy start to our summer months gave way to sunnier days, fall has arrived, and we find ourselves at the doorstep of another captivating season of programming and activities! It brings me immense joy to share the latest happenings at the La Jolla Historical Society.

First and foremost, let me express my deep gratitude for the success of our 60th Anniversary Campaign thus far. Your unwavering support has propelled us closer to our goal, and we are profoundly thankful for your dedication to our mission to preserve La Jolla's diverse past. To those members who have already contributed, your generosity warms our hearts and fuels our dedication to the important work that lies ahead!

Summer was a time of vibrant activity, with the Young Architects Summer Program (YASP) having hosted another group of talented young designers. We extend a special thank you to Board Member and YASP Founder Laura DuCharme Conboy for her tireless efforts in making this program an outstanding success. The enthusiasm and creativity displayed by our participants reaffirms our commitment to fostering the next generation of architects and thinkers.

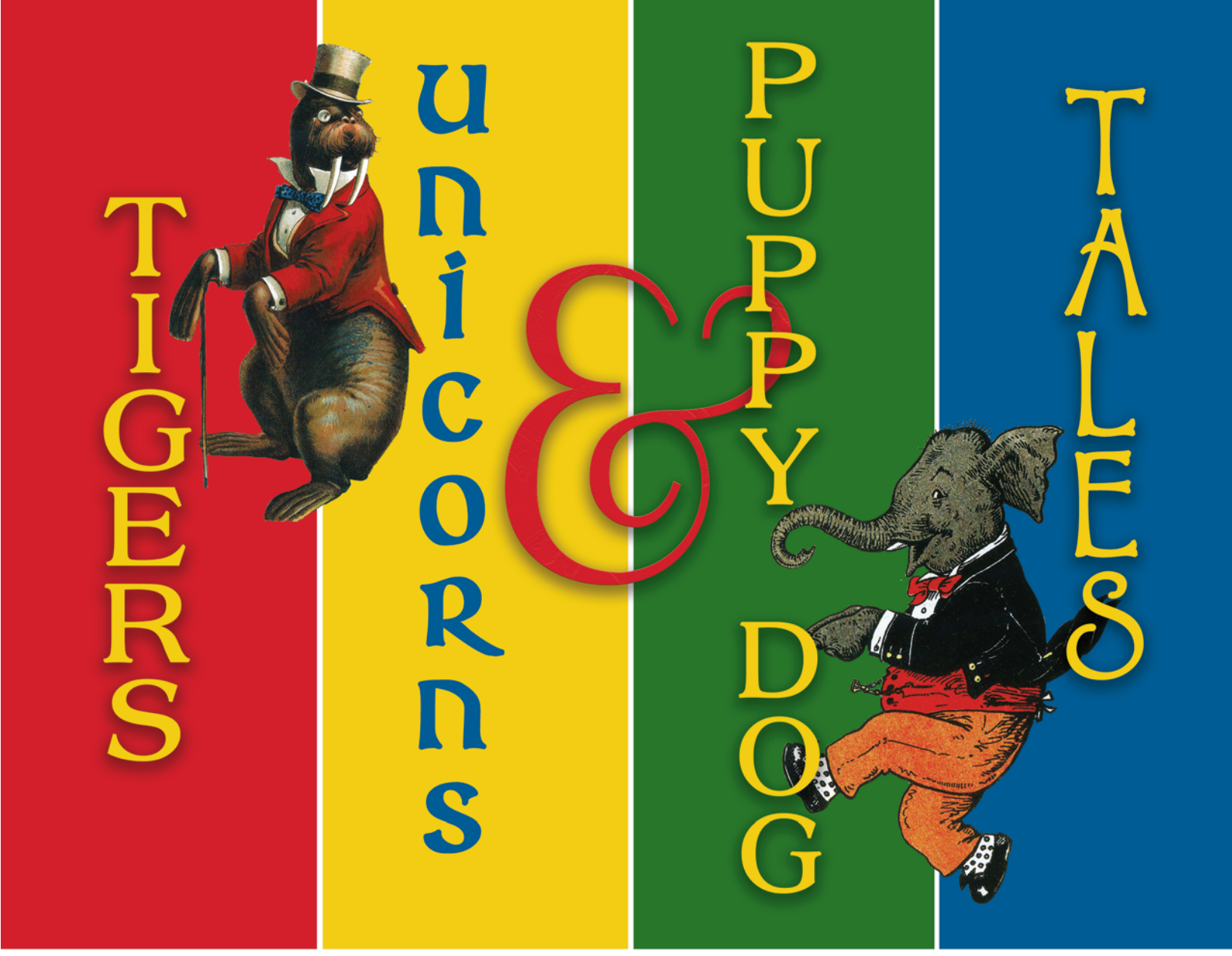
Looking ahead, we invite you to mark your calendars for the eagerly awaited fall exhibition, *Tigers, Unicorns, & Puppy Dog Tales*, curated by esteemed LJHS Historian, Carol Olten. This exhibition celebrates three iconic institutions that have left an indelible mark on the literary and cinematic history of our region: the Green Tiger Press, Unicorn Cinema, and Mithras Book Store. From September 23, 2023, to January 21, 2024, join us on a whimsical journey through time and imagination in this unique project.

And that's not all – the La Jolla Modernism Home Tour takes place October 14th! This event opens the doors to breathtaking midcentury modern private residences designed by influential modernist architects. Additionally, Landmark Week follows October 15-22 and features a range of exciting programs for architecture and preservation enthusiasts. Visit lajollahistory.org for complete details.

As we approach the close of our 60th Anniversary year, I extend a heartfelt invitation to visit us at Wisteria Cottage. La Jolla Historical Society thrives on the collective dedication of individuals like you, whose support sustains our work. Thank you for being a vital part of our community. Here's to a fall season filled with discovery, inspiration, and connection around history, art, culture and ideas!

With gratitude and excitement,

Lauren Lockhart
Executive Director



EXHIBITION
Featuring: Green Tiger Press, Unicorn Cinema & Mithras Book Store
CURATED BY CAROL OLTEN
Wisteria Cottage Sept. 23 - Jan. 21

Funding for this exhibition generously provided by Barbara Freeman, Henry & Carol Hunte, Ann Zahner, Nancy Warwick, Megan Heine, Charles Kaminski, Michael Mahan, Margie & John Warner, Max Elliott, and Elizabeth & Ron Davidson

“Feed your head...” the dormouse said!



If You're Afraid of the Dark Remember the Night Rainbow



A Star & Elephant Book
by Cooper Edens

REMEMBERING...

By Carol Olten



The Green Tiger Press, Unicorn Cinema and Mithras Bookstore landed among us in the high-spirited days of the 1960s – forces of wonder, magic and fantasy alighting in a world pulled wary by protest marches, love-ins and the counter-culture movement. Although operating in the different mediums of an independent publishing house (Green Tiger), a film venture (The Unicorn) and a bookstore (Mithras) all three shared a common pursuit – presenting and sharing whatever they found to be truly marvelous whether it was fairies and fantastical beasts. . . or Jacques Tati. . . or Rilke. They also shared a common muse in Harold Darling whose genius for eyeing the fantastical was equalled only by his personal amusement of writing under the pen name of Welleran Poltarnees, the mythical hero originally created by Lord Dunsany, the Anglo-Irish baron who wrote fairy and ogre stories as a sideline to living in a medieval Irish castle. Harold was joined early on in these three ventures by Sandra Woodward, an artist and illustrator, who became co-founder of Green Tiger and continues to head the operation after his death, writing under her own pen name of Alexander Day as the author of the bestselling “Good Dog, Carl” series; the Darlings became husband and wife and, in addition to publishing and literature pursuits, raised a large family with many of their children bearing literary names.

Venturing first into the re-printing of classic childrens’ literature and illustrations from the Victorian era, Green Tiger soon morphed into a small independent publishing company in San Diego, and later Seattle where it now is headquartered, with a circle of contemporary artists and illustrators such as Cooper Edens and Michael Hague, with their own ideas about fantasy stories for children (and adults!) and how to draw them. What happened was an entirely novel publishing genre, launched years ahead of “Harry Potter” appearing in Little Whinging, Surrey, or J.K. Rowling beginning to inhabit the wizarding world of Hogwarts.

With the Darlings as creative magnates, ingenious forces and artistic talents from all over the place seemed to land amidst this Southern California milieu of bohemian ferment and nirvana, mixing a sort of delightful romance with an intellectual climate of carefree hedonism. The spirit soon came to define the Tiger’s publications, undertaken out of an old car showroom in downtown San Diego, as well as in the scene that erupted as part and parcel of the films and literature presented at the Unicorn and the Mithras, both concealed behind inconspicuous facades in terribly ordinary-

looking buildings near the corner of La Jolla’s Pearl Street and La Jolla Blvd.

Yes, the places looked ordinary from the outside but there was nothing ordinary about what was inside – the people, the books or what was nightly offered for enlightenment on the single screen in front of you. At this time in the mid 1960s, I was a naïve Midwesterner transplanted to the California shore with a taste for Kerouac and Sartre but not much courage to swallow them, nor possessing of the mind to consider movies as anything beyond Disney’s mouse. My luck – I had an apartment near Wind ‘an Sea beach, just downstream of the Unicorn and Mithras – and eagerly absorbed the films – and the scene. The bookstore: Woody, worn bookshelves, lots of poetry, Eastern mysticism. Profs from the newly established UCSD campus contemplating the Koran. Daytime surfers turned intellectuals quoting Rilke, tanned bodies in velvet frock coats – was it Lord Byron they were channelling or Mary Shelley? The floor was a smash-up of collaged art prints and likely ephemera – the Darlings said they did it to save money, of course, and they probably did, but the effect of walking on the face of Botticelli’s Venus on the floor of the Mithras was sublime, not especially related to anything pecuniary! And, yes, dear children, there was incense – or what was it? – heavy in the air.

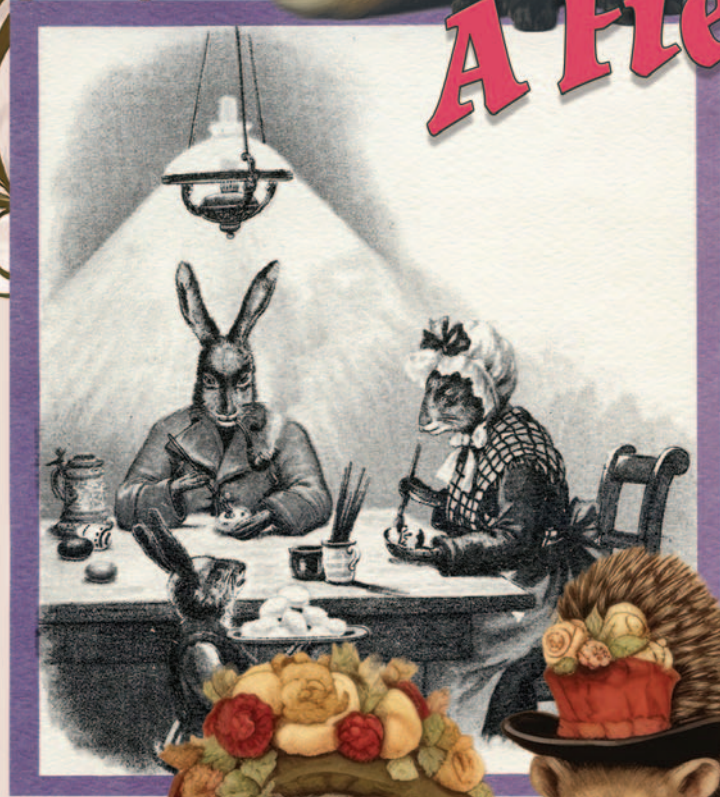
The adjacent cinema, entered through the bookstore, had a fine and beautifully decorative old-fashioned popcorn machine. And the nightly film fare featured wonderful tributes to pioneers of the good old days of movies by Buster Keaton, Busby Berkeley and the like. But what made the Unicorn unique was its introduction of the novel and avant garde – the French and German New Wave of Francois Truffaut, Werner Herzog, Fassbinder. One night might offer Cocteau. But the next could be Kurusawa. It was the only theater in San Diego where you could see art films like these, a range from Luis Bunuel’s “Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoise” to Bernardo Bertolucci’s “Garden of the Finzi-Continis” to Costa Grava’s passionately political “Z.” The Unicorn opened in 1964 with Truffaut’s now film noir classic, “Shoot the Piano Player.” It closed two decades later with the same film after becoming the first theater in the

Green Tiger, the Unicorn, the Mithras all came about because a few wonderful people believed in wonder.

...continued on page 12

A Field Guide to

Fantastical Images



...from the Wondermakers



Photographs by Pablo Mason
...continued on page 8



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HAROLD THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

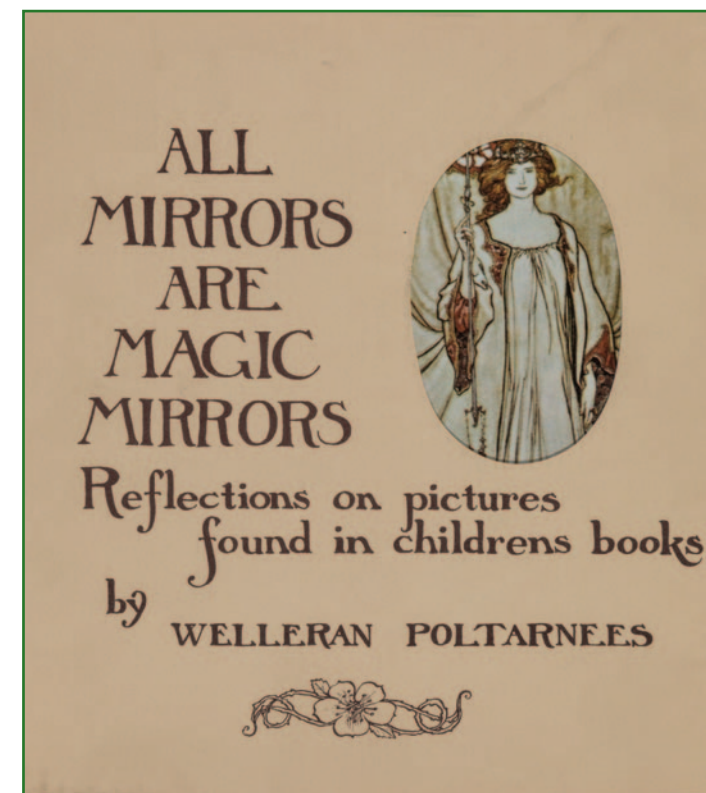
Editor's Note: When Harold Darling published the first book, "All Mirrors Are Magic Mirrors", for his fledgling Green Tiger Press in 1972, his primary aim was to address the multi-faceted subject of what was then known as "childrens' literature." The book's subtitle was "Reflections on pictures found in childrens' books" and, in examining the many stories and images created by popular writers and illustrators such as Kate Greenaway, A.A. Milne, Arthur Rackham, Maurice Sendak, Beatrix Potter and others, Darling surmised that "childrens' literature" was somewhat of a false nomenclature – that most books designed for childhood reading were just as readily enjoyed by adults. Was this

because Darling, writing under a mischievous pen name of Welleran Poltarnees, remained through adulthood a child at heart? Most probably so. What he wrote in his first book's introduction (reprinted here) remains a timeless, sly and insightful view into all those magical places of beautiful princesses, handsome princes, chatty rabbits, huggable bears, and occasional nasty elves, ogres and wizards that dance – or lurk – through the pages.

In meditating this book I found myself repeatedly obstructed by a confusion. I found I could not readily answer the question: 'Why are childrens' books created, and for whom are they intended?' Instinctively I inclined to read and judge them simply as works of art, but the critical and historical literature on the subject encouraged me to try to work the audience of children into my judgements. Thinking that others might also be puzzled by this problem I offer some of the questions I asked myself and some of the answers which thought offered.

"Most speculation assumes that childrens' books are written and illustrated to fill a need, the need of the world's children to have suitable books to read and look at. As reasonable as this sounds, I think that, in some very important ways, it is not true. Certainly the largest part of childrens' literature is manufactured on demand and does take its shape from the child's nature and interests, but these books are instructional tools or journalistic phenomena, not art. The best childrens' books are created not because of extreme need and pressures, but are the result of vision seeking manifestation. The great writers and artists of childrens' books choose this area of creation not because a demand needs to be satisfied, but because through accidents of temperament and ability they find themselves needing to make stories and pictures of a certain kind, and because of our need to classify we call this sort of material 'childrens' literature.' The categorization does have a rough, pragmatic validity. Many children do find this a preferred area of reading but many adults also find it satisfying and, in any case, the make-up of an audience at any given point in time, is of little consequence.

"The perfect situation exists between creator and spectator when someone needs to have made for his use that which another, for his own reasons, must make; but such perfections are rare and the quality of a work is not dependent of this contingency. Few came to (William) Blake's shop to buy his small, hand-colored volumes. In truth there is no essential difference between childrens' literature and the rest of literature. The trouble with inexact



categorizations is that many will use them as if they were the truth, and so it is with the category Childrens' Literature. The criticism of childrens' books is crippled by the mistaken idea that a psychology of childhood need determine one's judgements, and that the nature and needs of the child must somehow be reconciled with the demands of art. We must, to judge right, forget the intended or imagined audience and look at each work with the measuring eye of truth."

– Welleran Poltarnees (Harold Darling)



SANDRA'S STORY: A TEDDY BEAR PICNIC AND A BIG BLACK DOG

By Sandra Darling

The various enterprises of Harold Darling and myself were all born out of a love of books and images. Harold manifested his passion in his early pursuits, the The Sign of the Sun bookstore and The Shadow Box film theater. I was a literature graduate who became a painter.

In the mid 1960s, Harold started the Mithras bookstore and Unicorn theater in La Jolla, arranged together so that theater patrons entered the cinema through the bookstore, often arriving early and staying late to browse the new and used books the store offered and sit in the easy chairs for as long as they liked. Employees were known to stay into the small hours of the morning rather than ask a customer to leave and were ready to discuss subjects as various as gems, folk music, herbology, film history and theosophy. The conjunction created an atmosphere that drew the university students, the booklovers, the eccentrics and the film lovers that hungered for a place with an intellectual and eclectic ambience.

I met Harold as the bookstore was opening and began to design elaborate film programs and posters for the Unicorn. His film programming was innovative and wide-ranging incorporating foreign films, documentaries, short films, animation and American mainstream classics. There were midnight showings, film marathons that ran 24 hours and, so impressive was this outpouring, that Henry Langlois, the co-founder of the Cinematheque Francaise, planned to mount a tribute. Harold's love of film and books came together in one wonderful project that, unfortunately, ran out of money before completion. He was fascinated by a book about an automata and music box collection owned by a wealthy Swiss printer, Heinrich Weiss. So he wrote Weiss with a proposal of making a film of the automata in action. We hired a Hollywood cameraman, and with (Harold) Leigh as the still photographer (he was a very fine one as well as main projectionist at the Unicorn) packed up our children and went to spend a month in a small town outside Basel. But the film was never assembled.

About 1970, enamoured of the beautiful illustrations of such artists as Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, Warwick Goble, Jessie Wilcox-Smith and Boutet de Monvel, I suggested we try reproducing these out-of-print masterpieces as postcards. A local printer and an ad in The New Yorker launched a new enterprise that we named Green Tiger Press. Starting with help from the babysitter and a shipping station in an extra bedroom, the response to the images was immediate. We moved the business to a small house, a press in a Quonset hut and then to a one-time automobile showroom in downtown San Diego where we acquired our own two-color Heidelberg press and employed a staff of editors, designers, hand manufacturers, shippers and workers. The offerings expanded to hand-tipped



Photo courtesy Julia de Beauclair

The present Good Dog, Carl book inspiration – a hefty “Rotter” named Abelard – rests on the publishing company’s painted floor in the warehouse headquarters in Seattle.

notecards, matted prints and, of course, books. Harold's heart was always with the books and the press was soon accepting manuscripts and commissioning artists as well as creating books such as *The Book of Unicorns* that combined old illustrations, newly commissioned pieces and text both collected and written by Harold.

I turned to illustration because the press needed an illustrator for an edition they wanted to produce of the classic song, “The Teddy Bears’ Picnic” and adopted the name Alexander Day to be separate from my other roles with the business... The Childrens’ International Book Fair in Bologna awarded *Teddy Bears* a prize along with several of Green Tiger’s other books over the next several years. But the growth of the Green Tiger meant that we had less time for the bookstore and theater so the Mithras was given over to Elizabeth Ratisseau who had been manager. But by the mid 1980s, however, because of film activities changing and Elizabeth’s declining health, a decision was made to close both the theater and the bookstore. Other financial and infrastructure difficulties led to the sale of the publishing business and our move to Seattle in 1993.

Unable to stay out of the business of manifesting our enthusiasm for books and images, we started another company, the Laughing Elephant, with the participation of five of our children. The Green Tiger and Laughing Elephant continue today as sister companies... We can’t resist books!

Sandra Darling reviews “Good Dog Carl” artwork at studio in Seattle



Photo courtesy Linda Whealin



Cooper Edens became Green Tiger's first contemporary illustrator. His art work for the cover of "With Secret Friends" shows a young woman whose mirror reflection becomes a gentleman rabbit.

... and took an elevator up stairs to the Childrens' Book offices. Here a very nice woman in one of the editor's offices offered to interrupt her lunch and review my Childrens' Book I had stuffed in my leather suitcase.

After looking at all my paintings and reading the accompanying text she finished her sandwich and Coke and addressed me: "Mr Edens. This is most extraordinary! But the only person in the world who will publish this is Harold Darling ... of The Green Tiger Press ... out in La Jolla, California."

I hustled back to the Greyhound station, showed my U.S.A. pass and arrived three days later in the early morning in California at the Green Tiger Press ... just as Harold Darling and his family were arriving in La Jolla from Descanso. It was the start of a wonderful friendship.

... Remembering continued from page 5



Sandra Darling created original art work for Green Tiger's Book of Unicorns pictured here.

United States recognized for excellence of programming by the prestigious Cahiers du Cinema. That it attracted the edgy was part of its charisma. Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters made a stop here as part of their revolutionary cross - country trip in the bus named Further. Andy Warhol screened rushes for the surf film he made in La Jolla in the late 1960s at the Unicorn, pleased to trust the excellence - oriented projectionist Harold Leigh with his work.

By that time, having received

On Meeting The Darlings

By Cooper Edens

In 1976, I sketched my first illustration. I found an old photo of a house painter with his collection of brushes and buckets of wood stain and white wash.

This turned out to be my model for my Star-cleaner children's book. Almost immediately I began to caption my drawings with what would become the beginning of my storylines.

Soon I became fascinated with everything about children's books and then one day I found in a Library my ultimate inspiration: A new book published by The Green Tiger Press of La Jolla California, entitled, "All Mirrors Are Magic Mirrors" by Harold Darling.

And, yes, instantaneously upon reading this author's love for so many writers and illustrators ("Creators of Wonder"), I, too, was ready to join them in this dream-real place. I, too, wanting to write and illustrate Childrens' Books!

And for the next Summer, Fall, and Winter that's what consumed my fancy around the clock. And by Spring I was ready to take *Star-Cleaner Reunion* to New York City to get it published.

So ... I bought a U.S.A. Greyhound pass and packed all 32 paintings (12" by 24" each) into a leather-suit-case with a couple changes of clothes, some potato chips and a new toothbrush with new toothpaste.

I threw my suitcase up above in the rack over my bus seat after tying a chord from the suitcase's handle to my wrist...so if anyone tried to steal *Star-Cleaner Reunion* from me while I slept...they would wake me.

It took two and half days to cross Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, etc. And when I arrived in New York City, it was just about lunch time. But, I lugged my suitcase about six blocks up Broadway to Crown Publishing Company

an education immersing myself in programs at the Unicorn, I was on my way to becoming film critic for San Diego's metropolitan newspaper. At this writing, my evenings spent in amazement of all the marvelous illusions that passed before my eyes on the Unicorn's screen seem distant in time but in the same moment as near and real in their own way as the balletomane Vicky's slippers in "The Red Shoes." Perhaps, these illusions grounded in film, books and that big subject of Art lead to a truer way of knowing - and saving to memory - what humans define as magical or that part of knowing that is created by imagination.

Green Tiger, the Unicorn, the Mithras all came about because a few wonderful people believed in wonder. Maybe they trusted their instincts. But more likely they trusted their imaginations. And, as Lewis Carroll once said, "Imagination is the only weapon we have in the war against reality."

Sages In Seattle

by Benjamin Darling

Once upon a time there was a publishing company known as The Green Tiger Press! Announcing itself on the literary scene in 1970 with a single ad in *The New Yorker* magazine, Green Tiger enchanted readers with a treasure trove of books and greeting cards sparkling with magic and wonder.

Led by the spirited duo of Harold and Sandra Darling, driven by their love for old books and paper ephemera, they embarked on a journey to share captivating stories and breathtaking illustrations. Their books, calendars, and greeting cards served as portals to fantastical worlds, where talking animals, fairies, and even babysitting dogs filled the pages with delight.



As the years elapsed, the evolving publishing landscape prompted Green Tiger's transformation into Laughing Elephant. The Green Tiger Press, along with its emblematic carousel tiger, eventually found a new home with Simon and Schuster.

Embracing the timeless allure of their ever-expanding collection of classic books and postcards, this family-owned enterprise conjured an assortment of whimsical and nostalgia-infused books and gift items. Their repertoire ranged from charmingly illustrated greeting cards to lavishly adorned gift books, postcards, stickers, and exquisitely designed paper goods. This expansion of their publishing vision aimed to kindle imagination and warm hearts. The Green Tiger name and trademark (and the carousel tiger, which is an altogether different tale) were later reclaimed by the family, occasionally gracing special projects.

In 2017, the family mourned the passing of their beloved Harold Darling. Yet, his spirit endured through the vibrant characters and enchanting stories he had once brought to life. The legacy of Green Tiger Press persevered through the endeavors of Sacheverell 'Chev' Darling, Sandra, and Benjamin Darling, serving as a testament to Harold's visionary spirit and the indomitable force of imagination.

Today, Chev and Sandra lead Laughing Elephant Gifts in Seattle, tirelessly working to proliferate the beauty of vintage illustrations through inspired paper goods. Operating from a capacious warehouse in Seattle's Fremont neighborhood, brimming with an array of books, paper, and diverse treasures, their dedicated team collaborates to sustain the dream. They produce not only cards, stickers, and journals but also a myriad of delightful paper goods, all in the cherished traditions of Green Tiger and Laughing Elephant.

As the Darling family member remaining in San Diego, I continue to head the book division of the company, striving to introduce fresh nostalgia-themed publications to the world. Our library, boasting approximately seventy titles, finds its way into the market through distribution by Southern California Book Distributors of Gardena.

Today, the enduring legacy of the Darlings continues to captivate the hearts of all who venture into this realm of imagination and wonder.



Green Tiger mascot stands watch over the publishing operation today in Seattle. He will visit La Jolla for the "Tigers, Unicorns, & Puppy Dog Tales" exhibit this fall.

Photo courtesy Julia de Beauclair



The House of Dreams Awakens

by Molly McClain and Heather Crane

La Jolla boasts landmark houses in a range of styles, from English Tudor to Spanish Colonial and even Moorish Revival. One of the most unique, however, is the palatial East Asian “House O’Dreams” at 1428 Soledad Ave. Built between 1911 and 1918, it is a striking testament to the fascination with non-Western cultures in the early 20th century.

House O’Dreams was built by Florence White Howard (1855-1937), a free-spirited artist known for her public readings of Theosophical texts. The daughter of a wealthy manufacturer from Hanover, IL, she lived in Chicago with her husband John Urquhart Howard, a wool merchant, and two children. She traveled internationally and was a frequent visitor to world’s fairs, starting with the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Like

The entrance to the House O’ Dreams features eye-catching curved eaves with exposed rafter tails, characteristic of East Asian hip-and-gable roofs. *Photos courtesy of Berkshire Hathaway*

many of her contemporaries, she fell in love with “the Orient” and sought to replicate an idealized vision of beauty and serenity along the shores of the Pacific.

The house was built in two stages. In the summer of 1911, Florence hired contractor Perl Acton to build a one-story, six room bungalow. The living room, with its deep stone fireplace, looks much like the Green Dragon’s “Wahnfried.” Five years later, she rebuilt the house, turning it into a three-story palace topped by an East Asian hip-and-gable roof with multiple eaves painted black and red. Inside, rooms were remodeled to incorporate a “Chinese balcony” and mezzanine floor, a sun parlor, and an observatory with panoramic views. The house remains substantially unchanged after more than 100 years.

...continued on page 16

Florence may have sourced her architectural materials from San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1915) which featured a Chinese Village and a three-acre Imperial Japanese Garden with five large buildings and eight small pavilions. Designed and built by Asian architects and craftsmen, the structures were intended to be temporary. When the fair ended, they were disassembled and, eventually, sold. The Formosa Tea House became a residence in Belmont, CA, while the Japanese Commissioners' Office was shipped to Ardenwood farm in Fremont.

Inside the House O'Dreams was furniture and bric-a-brac collected from expositions in Chicago (1893), Buffalo (1901), St. Louis (1904), and San Diego (1915-16). These included Indian block-print curtains; bamboo stools; Chinese tea tables and chairs; and screens from the Japanese Tea House in Balboa Park. The house retains oil paintings of the Panamanian jungle built into the wall (perhaps a souvenir from one of the Panama Canal exhibits) and a portrait of a gypsy girl on the back of a door.

In addition to building her dream house, Florence developed a Japanese-style garden. Paths leading up the hill crossed an arched bridge wound through clusters of cherry trees, cedar, pines, and black bamboo. The garden also included several torii, or Japanese gates, traditionally used to mark the entrance to a sacred landscape.

House O' Dreams became a tourist attraction visited by hundreds of people who stopped on their way to La Jolla to view its many unusual features. It may have been conceived as a tea house like George Marsh's Japanese Tea Garden near the Hotel del Coronado. Or it may have



Top: The living room evokes Japanese aesthetics with the use of woven tatami mats on the walls and ceiling and pastoral bonsai tree patterned wallpaper. Below: The rustic fireplace, with its uncoursed random rubble masonry, is the focal point of the living room.

Photos courtesy of Berkshire Hathaway

“
*an Oriental dream of
fairyland*” and “*one of
the most charming
sights of La Jolla.*”
”

been a piece of performance art staged by Florence Howard to display her artistry and taste.

In a 1921 publication writer Eleanor Stanford called the house and gardens “an Oriental dream of fairyland” and “one of the most charming sights of La Jolla.”

Sadly, the dream house turned into a financial nightmare. Burdened with debt and facing foreclosure, Florence sold her home and its contents at auction in 1921. She moved to Long Beach to live with her daughter before traveling to India, possibly to visit the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, near Chennai. She lived in Long Beach until the Great Depression when she and her daughters moved to Bellflower where a relative had a poultry ranch. She died in 1937 at the age of 82.

The House O' Dreams remains a history-evoking La Jolla house that has changed remarkably little in over 100 years. It is hoped that future owners recognize its unusual history and architecture and find it a treasure to be cherished into future decades.

Above right: The home was designed to take advantage of La Jolla's temperate climate. The two-story volume at left is a sunroom over an open porch, whereas the one-story volume, center, and the second-level room at right, were once open porches that have since been enclosed.



Photography courtesy dirt.com

In the distant years of 1911 - 13 Florence Howard – an adventurous world traveler – purchased several lots on a barren hilltop knoll above La Jolla village with panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and cliffs and caves to the north. There she built a most unusual house – a house of multiple pagoda-shaped rooflines, curved-tail rafters, sunrooms and sleeping porches with much of it painted a conspicuous persimmon red. She called it her “House ‘O Dreams.” A few years later she abruptly left La Jolla, supposedly bound for India after selling in foreclosure. For many decades and into the present-day the house – referred to as the “Chinese” or “Japanese” house for its many Asiatic design influences – remained an anomaly, sleepily content in its own secrets hidden behind a forest of overgrown shrubs and trees. A death in the family that owned the house for decades after Howard's departure led to the property's recent placement on the real estate market. In the following article scholar Molly McClain reveals some newly discovered history and the exotic switchback life of the woman who built it.

– Carol Olten

EL PUEBLO RIBERA: Schindler at the Beach

By Robert Sweeney

El Pueblo Ribera—literally an Indian Village on a bank or shore – was a collaborative initiative of the Austrian émigré architect R. M. Schindler and his client, W. Llewellyn Lloyd (1880-1953), a mild-mannered dentist from Westfield, NJ. Dr. Lloyd and his wife Lucy (1888-1944) moved to California in 1922, settling in Riverside where they became active in the thriving citrus industry. They subsequently set their sights on San Diego, first staying at the Windsor Hotel on 4th Avenue. The circumstances of their introduction to Schindler are speculative but plans for Pueblo were well underway by April, 1923.

The sloping site overlooking the Pacific Ocean was a mile-and-a-half south of downtown La Jolla; vintage photographs show rudimentary wooden houses dotting the landscape at the time. The location may have been chosen for its proximity to a hotel a block to the west, opened as The Strand in 1910 and rechristened as Hotel Wind 'an Sea in 1920. The hotel by then was owned by Laura Snell whose husband was also a dentist. Whether part of the original vision or a later development, Schindler designed a startlingly ambitious new administrative center for the hotel at the intersection of La Jolla Boulevard and Playa del Norte. Laura Snell is identified as the client for this little-known project, never realized.

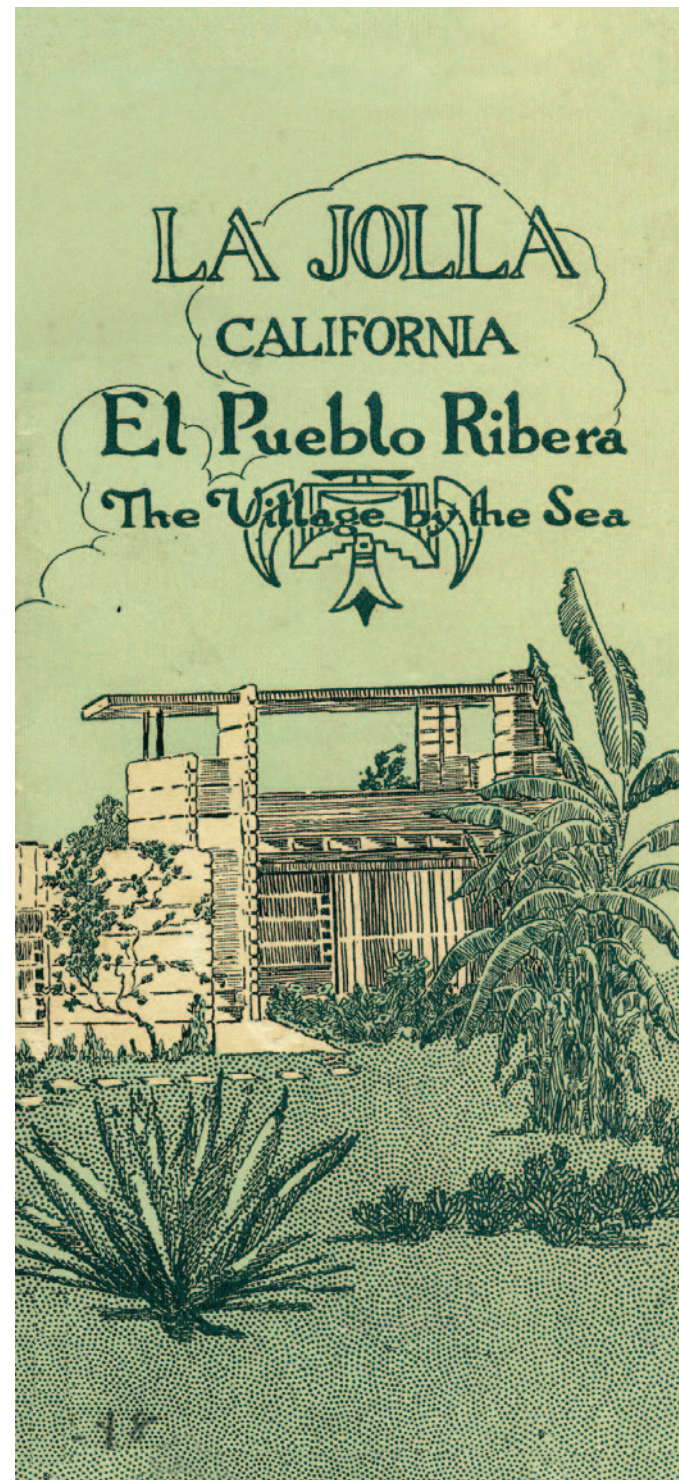
Pueblo Ribera was laid out as a compound of 12 beach cottages. Architecturally, it was a logical next step, structurally and formally, from the architect's own, seminal, 1921-22 Kings Road house in Los Angeles. Both were constructed of concrete: Kings Road, a variant of the tilt-up walls used earlier by Irving Gill in the La Jolla Woman's Club; Pueblo, a system in which the walls were raised in horizontal layers. In both projects, California redwood served as the dominant secondary material. Each of the Pueblo cottages, like the individual studios at Kings Road, had a "protected back" (a concrete wall) and an "open front" (sliding panels that opened to a garden). And, like the studios at Kings Road, the cottages were oriented for privacy.

Ground was broken in July, 1923; though work was still ongoing, the cottages were first occupied in early 1924. Response was uneven: some visitors were enthusiastic; others "...lacked the courage...to live in them." Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd themselves occupied the first cottage at the foot of Playa del Sur and almost immediately asked Schindler for plans to enclose the roof terrace, initiating the artistic bane

Early 20th century brochure advertises El Pueblo as a "Village by the Sea".

that has plagued El Pueblo Ribera ever since.

El Pueblo Ribera went into decline early on, partly because the site was not graded before construction began and the cottages settled, resulting in significant cracks in the concrete and leaks at the intersections of the walls and roofs. There also are lingering questions about the nature of the cementitious mixture used in the buildings. Evidence suggests that local sand was incorporated; if so, structural integrity



“When the Schindler project goes, one of Southern California’s greatest experiments in multiple housing design and construction methods will vanish also.”

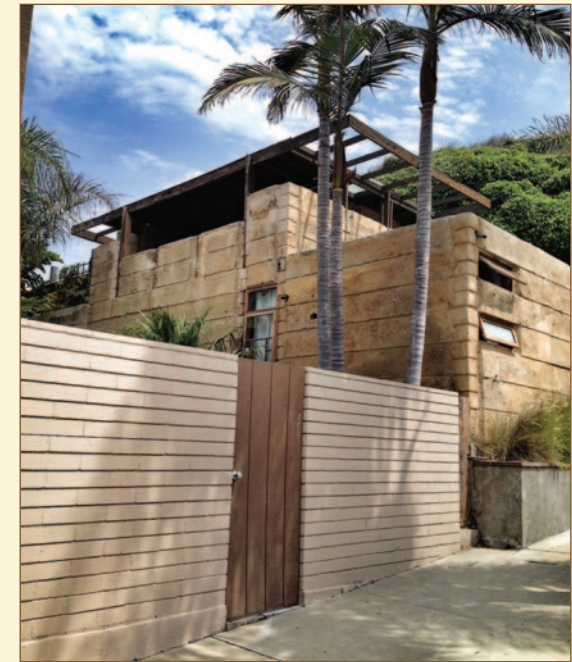
would have been compromised, a condition that plagued Frank Lloyd Wright’s concrete block houses in Los Angeles as well. The organic nature of the sand, not understood at the time, caused the concrete to disintegrate and absorb moisture. Metal reinforcing rods rusted and expanded; the concrete spalled as a result.

Also, Dr. Lloyd was overwhelmed financially. He first mentioned selling in 1923; the situation did not improve and Pueblo was parceled off in the 1930s. Subsequent unkindness of time and vicissitudes of individual ownership have worked in appalling opposition to the integrity of the project overall.

Perhaps the nadir was reached in 1983 with the destruction of two cottages by fire. Two years later, *The La Jolla Light* observed that while “Pueblo Ribera...is actually one of La Jolla’s few claims to a place in architectural history...,” today it “has the look of a crumbling World War II bunker...” By 1987, the “... specter of demolition” was very real. Kay Kaiser, architecture critic for *The San Diego Union*, noted that six of the units were for sale and that “...new condominiums, the eating machines that rip apart old neighborhoods, are closing in fast” and predicted, “Chances are good that Schindler’s complex will be consumed eventually...” She concluded, “When the Schindler project goes, one of Southern California’s greatest experiments in multiple housing design and construction methods will vanish also.”

Today, though much welcome reconstruction has taken place, none of the surviving cottages are visible as they were in photographs taken by Werner Moser in 1924 and Richard Neutra ca. 1925. The most faithfully restored, number 10, at 248 Gravilla Street, is faithful to Schindler’s original concept, thanks to the meticulous restoration completed by James Rega. James: Salut!

Robert Sweeney is President, Friends of the Schindler House, Los Angeles. He also has published several prior architectural works on Frank Lloyd Wright and Schindler.



<https://en.wikipedia.org>

LANDMARK WEEK

Architect Rudolf Schindler’s internationally acclaimed and one and only building design in La Jolla – El Pueblo Ribera – will be a featured subject of Landmark Week, a series of historic preservation programs and events held Oct. 15-Oct. 22 at various venues and locations. A highlight of the series will be a tour of El Pueblo, the beach bungalow court Schindler designed in 1923 near Wind ‘an Sea, at 1:30 p.m. Oct. 15. The tour will be preceded by a panel discussion and film documentary on the architect and his experiments with cement as a modern building material presented by the La Jolla Historical Society from 10-11:30 a.m. at the La Jolla Riford Community Center. Participants are Keith York, Reena Racki and Valentina Ganeva. A second architectural panel headed by Tony Crisafi at 6 p.m. Oct. 19 at La Jolla Woman’s Club will address *La Jolla’s Redeveloping Neighborhoods: Reflections on Design*. The Landmark group will host a community picnic from noon-2 p.m. Oct. 21 at Scripps Park in celebration of creating a La Jolla Park Coastal District. Final activity of the week at 4pm, Oct. 22 will be a Jewel Award program for historic homeowners held at a 1951 midcentury home designed by architect Frederick Liebhardt.

FILING FOR THE FUTURE

Working with the archival collections of the La Jolla Historical Society has been nostalgic and impressive. Since my arrival in the Spring of 2019, I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with five intelligent and dynamic interns. These interns have all been university students majoring in history. Together we have been successful in turning the collections into a searchable resource for researchers and have organized and cataloged La Jolla's history, one piece of paper and one photograph at a time. The paid interns were made possible by two back-to-back grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). As of July 2023, we have created container lists for over 230 boxes of archival material within four collections: Biographical Files, Subject Files, Street Files and Large Subject Files. Container lists and collection descriptions are available for you to peruse and search online on the Online Archive of California, where the LJHS has its own page. We have now progressed to work on our next sizeable collection, the donor-based collection, which is comprised of 71 individual collections donated by specific people, families and organizations. Meanwhile, two of our interns, Aaron Morales and Francesca Kading, share some thoughts of their work.

– Dana Hicks Ph.D.
Collections Manager



Imagine you're cleaning out someone else's garage, except you can't throw anything out. You have to organize the contents of each box so that other people can easily find what they're looking for, create a comprehensive list of descriptions of everything in the garage, upload that list to a digitized database, and well, at this point the analogy breaks down.

This is probably the best way I can explain my job as archives intern at the La Jolla Historical Society for the past three years. Imperfect analogies aside, working here has been an incredible experience. In working with everything from photos to newspaper articles, to event programs, I have learned so much about not only La Jolla's history, but about the important work of preservation and public history.

Our task is essentially to document everything in the Historical Society's archives: box by box, file by file, page by page. This, of course, takes quite a bit of time and effort. For some perspective, it took me and my fellow interns a collective two years to finish cataloging the Large Subject Files Collection, a collection covering over 60 subjects and consisting of exactly 100 boxes. What I mean by "cataloging" in this context is firstly, the creation of a container list and, secondly, the uploading of that list to a local digital database in the Historical Society's computers. Put simply, a container list is a document containing short descriptions of every photograph, newspaper article, letter, or other object within a given box. These lists are then printed out, put into their respective boxes, and uploaded to the Historical Society's digital archival database to help researchers quickly peruse a sort of table of contents for the box. This digital database also allows researchers to search all existing container lists for names, themes,

or other key words to help them find what they're looking for.

Technicalities of my work aside, I have been fortunate enough to be able to document a wide variety of archival material covering an equally diverse number of subjects including the cove, UC San Diego, trains and streetcars, and more. If I had to pick a favorite collection to work on, it would probably be the Green Dragon Colony.

– Aaron Morales.
University of California, San Diego, History Major (2024)

When I was first hired at the La Jolla Historical Society, I knew little to nothing about working with archival materials. Nevertheless, I was enthusiastic to learn and develop my skills, while simultaneously fueling my passion for history. There are many various collections in our archives. Each collection pertains to topics central to the history of La Jolla or related to the Southern California region, comprising scrapbooks, albums, photographs, documents, and other materials that we must carefully catalogue and input into PastPerfect, an in-house database. One of the first collections I was tasked with was the Scripps Family Collection. As you can imagine, there are over ten boxes full of archival materials relevant to the famed Scripps family, whose deeds have undoubtedly influenced not only the community of La Jolla but all of San Diego. Their name lives on today with many organizations and resources that were made possible thanks to their generosity and persistence to give back to the people. I came to know Ellen Browning Scripps quite well because of the sheer amount of information that has been gathered. She is likely one of the most well-known members of the Scripps family because of her significant role as an extraordinary benefactress. As a celebrity, Miss Ellen was purposeful in how she presented herself to the public, therefore most of the articles and photographs we have of her depict her as the composed and refined woman like the image on the cover of *TIME* magazine, 1926. However, my favorite archival materials are the ones in which I was able to see her, not as the remarkable philanthropist she came to be known as, but as simply Ellen, a compassionate and clever woman. In one particular photograph, she is pictured with a rare smile beside Natalie Boshko's daughter, Natasha Boshko. The sweet moment is forever memorialized by the photograph. Working at the La Jolla Historical Society has allowed me to meet and learn about many such amazing people whose passions have inspired me to pursue my own aspirations.

– Francesca Kading
University of California, San Diego, History Major (2024)



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CALENDAR FALL/WINTER 2023



September 23 - January 21
Tigers, Unicorns & Puppy Dog Tales

Exhibition
Wisteria Cottage



October 15
El Pueblo Ribera Tour
1:30pm
Gravilla St.



September 23
Book Signing
Alexandra Day (Sandra Darling)
Good Dog Carl series

Warwick's
2 pm



October 19
Architectural Panel
Moderated by Tony Crisafi
La Jolla Woman's Club
6pm



September 30
Film About
Shoot the Piano Player
Wisteria Cottage Lawn
7pm



October 21
Scripps Park
Landmarks Week Picnic
12pm - 2pm



September 30
Community Art Workshop
Kline Swonger
Balmer Annex
10am - 12:00pm



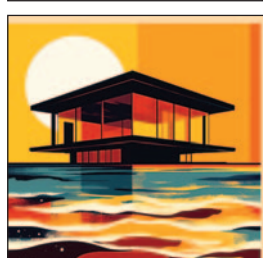
October 21
Childrens' Literature Reading
Words on 'Ween
Wisteria Cottage
2pm



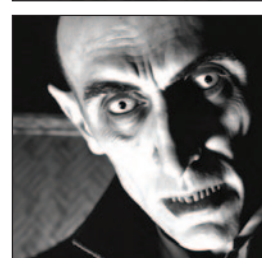
October 8
'Toons & A Goose
Cartoons for Kids and
Paint A Cookie Workshop
Balmer Annex and Wisteria Lawn
2pm - 4 pm



October 22
Jewel Awards Program
Frederick Liebhardt House
4pm



October 14
La Jolla Modernism
Home Tour
10am - 3pm



October 28
Halloween Film Night
Vamping With Vampires
Wisteria Cottage Lawn
7pm



October 15
Schindler Panel Discussion
La Jolla Riford Community Center
10am - 11:30am



December 10
Childrens' Literature Panel
Life After Oz
Balmer Annex
2pm



SNAPS



The La Jolla Historical Society's Young Architects program again had a sold-out venue this summer with 25 middle and high school students experiencing what it might be like to have careers as professional architects through week-long sessions of sketching, designing and site visits to various projects. Thirteen students, including eight from outside San Diego County and two from out-of-state, attended the middle school sessions; the high school program attracted 12 students from local educational facilities. Both programs were conducted under the leadership of La Jolla architect Laura DuCharme Conboy with artist and LJHS Board Member Johnny "Bear" Contreras serving as "client" for an imaginary 400-sq-ft. studio the students were asked to design on the Wisteria Cottage lawn.



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Historic Charm & Ocean Vistas



La Jolla Historical Society is the ideal setting for your special event. Contact Events Manager Karla Cook at kcook@lajollahistory.org or 858.459.5335 to book today.



Photos by Pauline Conway



At the zoo

Big Dog Carl Is Good

The AKC standard defines Rottweillers, a dog breed descended from the mastiffs of the Roman legions, as “calm, confident and courageous with a self-assured aloofness” with no associations of being “mean” although that is something of the public image. Sandra Darling, (aka Alexandra Day) has been illustrating and writing childrens’ books about the big black dog for several decades, the first being *Good Dog, Carl* published by Green Tiger Press in 1985. In the series, now numbering more than a dozen titles, Carl is a loveable Rottweiler who adores children and has adventures going to the park, the zoo and other diverse destinations associated with children and families. (He also has apparent creative talents at making Valentines and reading books to children who don’t want to go to bed at night.) The idea for Carl was inspired by a one-sheet Sandra and Harold Darling spotted in a Zurich store window showing a small black dog rescuing a baby who had fallen out of a cradle. Sandra changed the small black dog to a big black dog after a Rottweiler at home and created the legendary Carl. In-house pets at the Darlings’ homes have repeatedly been Rottweillers and the household in Seattle is now in its 6th reiteration of the breed with an especially large fellow named Abelard. Sandra is currently working on a new book *The True History of Carl*, once again reinforcing his reputation as a very good boy!

– Carol Olten



Making Valentines



Babysitting



Greeting Santa



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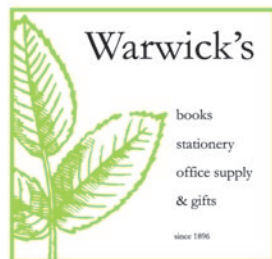
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