



# BULLETIN

MARCH/APRIL 2023

[www.southbayhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.southbayhistoricalsociety.org)

## SPONSORSHIP PRAISE

At this time, we want to give thanks to our donors who have supported the South Bay Historical Society and Chula Vista Heritage Museum. We also have gratitude for your generous support by being a member of our organizations, coming to our events and making suggestions so that we can continue to bring education exhibits and programs to you for free.





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With my current term as president of the South Bay Historical Society ending in October, the board will be seeking new leadership for our Society. The history of our region has such a rich history and needs to be told to members of our community. I hope you will join us to share our rich heritage with our community.

The Chula Vista Heritage Museum board offered an extension of Filipinos of South Bay (FOSBE) Exhibit for another year inside the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. Anamarie Cabato on behalf of the FOSBE committee accepted the proposed extension which would run the current exhibit through December 2024. Along with the exhibit, which can be viewed at the Civic Center Library, there will be upcoming events to highlight the Filipino community.

In other news our board member Sandra Scheller, has kept her promise to Never Forget. She has spoken to schools including her Alma mater Chula Vista High School, military bases, museums and other organizations. She has curated another exhibit sponsored by the County of San Diego, opening ceremonies, May 21st from 11am - 1pm at Rancho San Diego Library. The exhibit will highlight Holocaust survivors from San Diego County.

Southwestern College, as part of its President Speaker Series, will be hosting a Holocaust Remembrance program featuring survivors of the Holocaust, their family members, and other special guests. The event at the college will be Thursday on May 4th, from 1:30pm - 3:30pm.

Another board member Jack Gechter, through the South Bay Historical Society, has proposed the Society pay for US 101 Historic road signs to be placed through Chula Vista, National City and San Diego along this historic US 101 route. While the board has voted to fund the signs, details with the cities for placement are ongoing.

April 2nd the South Bay Historical Society had an informational booth at the Living Coast Discovery Center, for Animals on the Bay Day. The Society was represented by Patricia Huffman, Peter Watry, Nancy Acosta - Meza, Sandra Scheller and myself.

Julio Martha, founder of the San Diego Art Society and the Chairman of the Beautification Committee for the EnVision Broadway project is working with the Institute of Public Strategies and the City of Chula Vista to beautify the Broadway Avenue corridor by placing murals along the walls of businesses on the avenue.

The San Diego Art Society artists have been commissioned to create a mural at the Chula Vista Shopping Center Mall. Artists would paint the history of Chula Vista on this 200-foot-long by 14-foot-high mural. The artists would like to meet for historical information. This would be very helpful, so that accurate information is on the mural. Steven Schoenherr and myself will be meeting soon to consult with the Art Society.

We look forward to meeting you at one of our community events and to provide a historical perspective to our shared past history. Thank you for your support of the South Bay Historical Society.



**Harry Orgovan**  
President  
South Bay Historical Society



## PRESIDENT'S VIEW

### Notes of a Historian



An important part of being a historian is to take note of history as is taking place. Our lives will soon be changed, never to be reversed. SANDAG, under the leadership of chairperson SD County Supervisor Nora Vargas, will impose a county-wide mass-transit railway system, in the name of “Climate Change”. The need for this railway system is to reduce the number of us using our carbon-polluting cars and choosing railway mass transit to travel about the county. The projected railway project has a starting price of \$160,000,000. The project is paid for by people who use their cars. We will be paying a per mile charge to drive, along with toll-roads.

Railways with their wheel to rail wear and braking, produce heavy-metal particles 30 times thinner than a human hair, which can be inhaled deeply in the lungs. This major air pollution can affect lung development and is linked to emphysema, asthma, chronic obstruction, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), respiratory diseases and cardiac effects. People who live near these railways, work or use them would be most affected. The land that would need to be dug up along these transportation corridors would often be made up of hazardous materials thought to be adequate as landfill.

With the state of California mandating the selling of only EV's, along with the sodium-ion battery packs, this will change the carbon producing driving in our region.

Harry Orgovan

South Bay Historical Society - President



# PHOTO GALLERY

## Making History



South Bay Historical Society had an informational booth at the Living Coast Discovery Center, for Animals on the Bay Day.

The Society was represented by Patricia Huffman, Peter Watry, Sandra Scheller, Nancy Acosta-Meza, and Harry Orgovan.



The South Bay Historical Society Board Member April Meeting at Las Tres Catrinas Restaurant, Chula Vista Mall.

Meet our new board members: Jack Gechter and Nancy Acosta-Meza







## SOUTH BAY PLACES

### Vernal Pools

#### Vernal pools,

are ancient seasonal wetland habitats that dot the tops of our coastal mesas and have survived from 125,000 to 400,000 years ago. The pools have a subsoil base of natural concrete material with layered soils on top. The late winter rains fill the pools with water that cannot percolate into the ground, the water can only evaporate. The vernal pool depressions are surrounded by mounds of dirt two to three feet high called Mima Mounds. Coastal sage shrubs grow on these mounds like Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), Lemonade Berry (*Rhus integrifolia*), Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*), Deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), Scrub Oak (*Quercus dumosa*), Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) and Sumac (*Rhus coriaria*). The shrubs low the evaporation of the water from vernal pools, giving time for life in these pools to develop, flourish and reproduce. The cycles of life in a vernal pool are short. So organisms grow and reproduce faster than in other ecosystems. Twenty-four hours after a heavy rainfall, the cycle of life begins anew.

The first forms of life to appear are one-millimeter-long copepods and microscopic plant plankton. As the plankton multiply, fairy shrimp hatch and begin to feed on these small plants. After the fairy shrimp appear seed shrimp (Cyprididae) will hatch. Within 24 hours a small aquatic crustacean called Daphnia (*Daphnia pulex*) hatch. All of these crustaceans begin laying eggs that will hatch quickly. As the water evaporates and the water level drops, the salts leached from the soil become concentrated. It is this increase in salinity that triggers the crustaceans to lay eggs in cysts of glass or silica. These cyst-encased eggs can lay dormant for years, until the next optimum period of moisture occurs.

The major predator in a vernal pool is the Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*). This half-inch-long amphibian digs 20 foot long burrows. The burrows are one to three feet underground with the entrance somewhere in the vernal pool.

Spadefoot Toads are difficult to observe because they are nocturnal. The male toads have a purr like trill, which on a rainy night will attract a female. The female attaches egg masses to vegetation which hatch in two days. Upon hatching, the eggs produce tadpoles that grow rapidly by eating the fairy shrimp. The tadpoles develop into toads and begin to dig their burrows in preparation for a long hot summer and fall. As the water evaporates, the toads seal their burrows and sleep until the winter rains come again. As the water begins to evaporate in the spring and the pools dry, blossoms of every color will fill these pools. In summer, these seasonal wetlands dry out completely until the cycle of life begins with the next winter rains.



Among the species either endangered or threatened found in vernal pools are the San Diego Button-Celery (*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *parishii*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), Otay Mesa Mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), Riverside Fairy Shrimp (*Strep-tocephalus woottoni*), San Diego Fairy Shrimp (*Branchinectasandiegensis*), Spreading Navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), Spadefoot Toad and the San Diego Mesa Mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*). It is the San Diego Mesa Mint's protected status which has saved the remaining vernal pools in San Diego County. The vernal pools found in San Diego County can be found on Otay Mesa, Del Mar Mesa and Kearney Mesa. There are less than 2,500 acres of vernal pools today in San Diego County. Vernal pools are managed in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies.

**By Harry Orgovan-**  
**South Bay Historical Society - President**



# SOUTH BAY ARTIFACTS

## The Chula Vista Yacht Club Trophy

By **Harry Orgovan**- President of The South Bay Historical Society

### Chula Vista was founded in the late 1880's,

by the San Diego Land and Town Company, composed of stockholders and directors of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Prior to this time, Chula Vista consisted of four homes with a windmill and well as a water supply.

On July 4th, 1889, the San Diego Land & Town Co., provided settlers to Chula Vista a waterfront park with a new pavilion. These settlers took on the title of the Chula Vista Yacht Club. Eight years later the Chula Vista Yacht Club used Land & Town Co. materials from a railroad wharf in National City, to build a wharf at the foot of D Street in Chula Vista, and later a replacement was built at the foot of F Street

By 1901, club members constructed a clubhouse through private donations. The club had 11 yachts and sailed on weekends. The sailing vessels were class one sloop's, rigged about 28 feet long. During this time the club would gather on the shore for a potluck as competitive races took place in the bay.

The club started an annual four-race regatta known as the Montibello Cup Series, Joseph M. Cook of the Montibello Ranch provided the trophy.

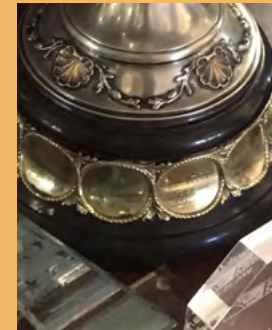
By 1911, the year Chula Vista became an incorporated city, Mr. B.P. Cheney donated a large sterling silver trophy to the club. The Chula Vista Yacht Club trophy, donated by Cheney, from that point on carried near the base of the trophy, the engraved names of the winners and their boats.

The following are the names engraved up until 1916. 1911: E.L. Shields, in the Lark. 1912: E.L. Shields in the Lark. 1913: Chester and Holly Summers, in the Seabird. 1914: C.O. Boltz, the Nereid. 1915: E.E. Rogers in the Lark.

The Yacht Club purchased its wharf from the Land Co. and incorporated on Feb. 24, 1914. Greg Rogers became the first commodore.



The Yacht Clubs Trophy can be viewed at Chula Vista City Hall.



Greg Rogers enjoyed fishing and sailing. Second from left holding albacore.

# SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL LEADERS



Greg Rogers was instrumental in the formation and development of three yacht clubs in the San Diego area.

He was elected to serve as one of the city's first councilmen and was co-founder of Peoples State Bank of Chula Vista, our community's first financial institution.

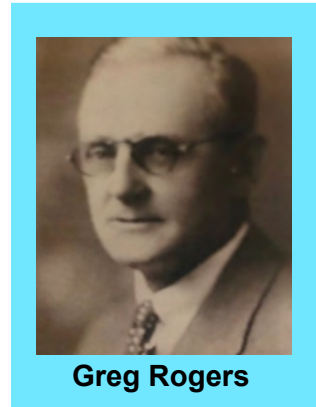


Peoples State Bank located on the northwest corner of Third and F St.

The bank was located on the corner of Third Ave. and F Street and was later sold to the Bank of Italy which later became Bank of America. Greg Rogers was a member of the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce, the Chula Vista Rotary Club, the San Diego Country Club and the Upper Otay Duck Club. Rogers was also a member of the School District Board of Education and has a school and park named in his honor.

Greg Rogers

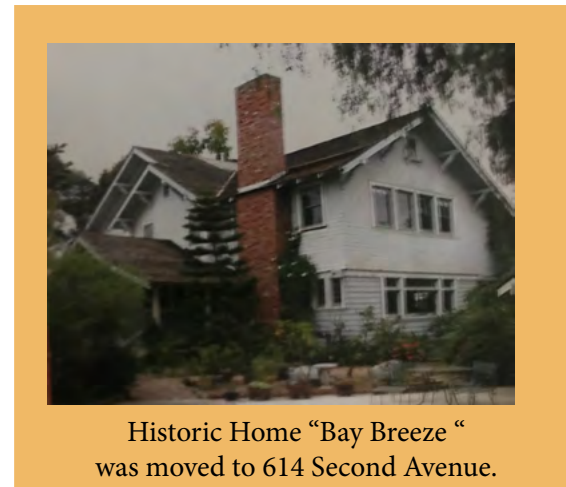
By **Harry Orgovan**  
President of  
**The South Bay Historical Society**



**Greg Rogers**

Greg with his wife Rose had migrated west and in 1909 stayed in Coronado for a year, while having their custom house in Chula Vista built. The house which they called "Bay Breeze" was considered one of the most modern built in the region at the time. Its 5,700 sq. ft. included electricity, several baths with indoor plumbing, four fireplaces and five stairways. Groves of lemon trees were planted around Bay Breeze and Greg became an active member of the Chula Vista Citrus Association.

The house was originally located at the current intersection of E Street and Interstate 5. Bay Breeze would be moved and restored to 614 Second Ave in 1984.



Historic Home "Bay Breeze"  
was moved to 614 Second Avenue.



# SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL EVENTS

## Historical Disasters

### **The Great Flood of 1916**

When the original Otay Dam broke after 34 inches of rain through January in 1916, it released 30 billion gallons of water washing across the Otay River Valley and Tijuana River Valley. The Sweetwater Dam was also releasing water from damage to the structure. Water mains broke, roads and railroad tracks were washed away leaving Chula Vista isolated by land, surrounded by water. Greg Rogers used his own private boat to cross the river between Chula Vista and National City. He delivered needed supplies to stranded homeowners and brought many of the victims back to San Diego. Many farmers and their families who farmed in the valleys behind the dam lost their lives from drowning, along with cattle, buildings, wild animals all swept into the bay by the flood waters.

Afterward the city, which had been hesitant at first to help the club to improve the dock, now agreed to pave a road down F Street to the pier. After the flood, the club disbanded. The bay filled with debris made sailing hard. The clubhouse from this period of time was dismantled on March 18, 1934, and taken to Scammons Lagoon in Baja California 250 miles south.

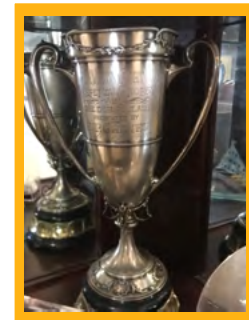
The Chula Vista Yacht Club Trophy was taken to Santa Barbara until in the late 1950's when Warner Edmonds, a yacht club member returned the treasured trophy to the city.

The cup can be seen at Chula Vista City Hall. After Greg's wife Rose died in 1949, Greg moved to Fredericka Manor where he lived until his death in 1955 at the age of 80.

By **Harry Orgovan**  
President of  
The South Bay Historical Society

Information from an article by Sandy Palumbo-The Star News Extra-April 9,1987.

Altrusa International Chula Vista:  
They Made Chula Vista History: **Greg Rogers:**  
Pictures provided by **Pamela Bensoussan.**



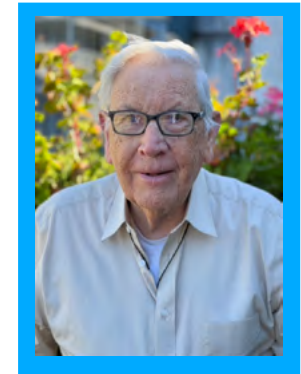




## HISTORICAL NAMES

### Fort Emory

By **Peter Watry**  
SBHS BOARD MEMBER



As you are driving up or down the Silver Strand, you see this new sign: “ Old Fort Emory Blvd.” Who was ‘Emory’?



Who was “Emory”? Why was the Army artillery base just north of Imperial Beach named for him? At the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the United States acquired the area of California and much else. The California border was to go west from the middle of the Gila River at its entry into the Colorado River in a straight line to one ‘marine league’ south of the southernmost point of the port of San Diego, not the bay of San Diego.

One “league” is approximate 2.6 miles. One league south of the port of San Diego would put the Mexican border about the middle of National City. Major Emory ignored that and assumed it meant the southernmost point of the bay of San Diego. Mayor William H. Emory was considered the best surveyor in the Army and he was given the task of surveying the new border and erecting markers along the way, all the way from Tijuana to El Paso.

He and a party of Mexican surveyors worked together. Emory says how he would first use his instruments and knowledge and calculations to say where the border should be.

He said that then the Mexicans would take his data and think about it and talk about it, and then would agree - - they never once contradicted his conclusion.

However, it has always been rumored that Major Emory cheated a little bit and made it a bit longer than ‘one marine league’ south of the bay. On a modern AAA map, in fact, Palm Avenue is exactly 2.6 miles south of today’s San Diego bay. But where was the “southern most part of the bay” in 1848? A study using a map of San Diego Bay drawn in the late 18th Century by a Spaniard for his King, it seems that Major Emory did, indeed, draw the line at least 1 1/2 leagues south the Bay. This map was the Official map of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

Well, the people of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce in 1941 were certainly “Emory fans,” and asked the Army to name their new Army artillery post north of Imperial Beach “Fort Emory” in his honor, and they did. And now his name forever names a road on that property.



## Announcements

If you have an interest in joining our SBHS, contact us!

We would love to share historical articles or photos you may have!

Visit our website for more information.

[www.southbayhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.southbayhistoricalsociety.org)