



NEWSLETTER

FALL & WINTER 2023-2024

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.





A MESSAGE FROM OUR PAST PRESIDENT HARRY ORGOVAN

Thank you to everyone who has helped over the years to bring a better understanding of our region's history and help to preserve our communities legacy. When I think back, my interest in preserving our historical heritage goes back to my association with Steven Schoenherr and his research for Chula Vista's Centennial book published by the city of Chula Vista August 2011. His interview with my brother Frankie and myself opened up a journey I am still on. Today Steve serves as the South Bay Historical Society's Historian Emeritus. He moved to San Diego in 1977 and taught in the department of History at the University of San Diego till 2007. In 2013, I attended, at the home of Susan Walter, a meeting to form the South Bay Historical Society. Since that time I have served on the board as vice-president and ended my second two year term as president of the society in October of 2023. While I still plan on remaining on the board my days as an officer are over and my days to serve are surely numbered.

In 2014 the city of Chula Vista requested for the South Bay Historical Society to take over planning and operation of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum within the Civic Center Library. The society accepted the offer and opened The Great Flood of 1916 exhibit in the Chula Vista Heritage Museum on January 27, 2016.

The exhibits that followed were Rohr Aircraft Industries, Fronterizos: A History of the Spanish-speaking People of the South Bay San Diego, Natural History & Indigenous People of the South Bay Region, Ruth: Remember Us The Holocaust and Filipinos of the South Bay culminating at the end of 2024.

The city of Chula Vista has decided to dissolve its formation of the board of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum with notice from Principal Librarian Joy Whatley and Cultural Arts Manager Erwin Magbanua to President of the Board of the Friends of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum, Harry Orgovan, on July 18, 2023.

Also on July 18, 2023 the Executive Board of the Friends of the Chula Vista Library voted to end their Chapter called the Friends of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. The City Manager Marie Kachadoorian in a meeting with Harry Orgovan, President of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum board on October 24, 2023, confirmed that the city was in agreement with the actions to end their agreement with the members of the board of the Friends of the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. The museum will be under the Cultural Arts Manager of the Chula Vista Library, Erwin Magbanua. Also present at the meeting were South Bay Historical Society board members, current President Marie Zhivago, and Vice-President Francia Castro.

I am very hopeful that under new leadership the South Bay Historical Society will work to preserve our historical heritage and continue the relationship in our region to expand our historical knowledge and understanding. I thank everyone for your support over the years and into the future.

Yours in service to our community,
Harry Orgovan



Harry Orgovan
Past President
South Bay Historical Society
2022-2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARIE ZHIVAGO

“Preserving the Past, Shaping the Future.”

In a historic moment, the South Bay Historical Society in San Diego County welcomes its new president, Marie Zhivago.

Ushering in a fresh era of dedication to preserving and celebrating the rich tapestry of our local history. As the torchbearer of this esteemed institution, as your president I will embark on a journey to not only honor the past but to shape a vibrant future for the community.

The South Bay Historical Society has long been a guardian of the region's heritage, meticulously collecting artifacts, documenting stories, and curating exhibits that transport visitors through time. I have a passion for history and a vision for innovative initiatives that will engage both long-time enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

One of my key focal points is to enhance community involvement. By fostering partnerships with local schools, community groups, and businesses, the South Bay Historical Society aims to weave itself into the fabric of everyday life. Workshops, lectures, and interactive exhibits will be curated to make history accessible and enjoyable for all ages, ensuring that the society becomes an integral part of the community's cultural landscape.

In the era of technology, the South Bay Historical Society will not shy away from embracing digital advancements. Plans are underway to create an online platform that will provide virtual access to historical archives, allowing individuals to explore the region's past from the comfort of their homes. This initiative not only caters to a wider audience but also ensures the preservation of delicate artifacts through digital conservation efforts.

For the future, I envision a dynamic museum experience that goes beyond the traditional exhibits. Temporary displays showcasing contemporary local artists, collaborations with cultural festivals, and themed events will breathe new life into the historical society, transforming it into a hub of creativity and cultural exchange.

Preserving architectural heritage is also a key focus. Restoration projects and partnerships with local government bodies will be explored to safeguard and showcase historical buildings, ensuring that they stand as living testaments to the legacy of South Bay, San Diego County.

As the new president of the South Bay Historical Society, the vision extends beyond the boundaries of the institution itself. Collaborations with neighboring historical societies and nationwide initiatives will be pursued to create a network that amplifies the collective voice of historical preservation, sharing knowledge and resources for the benefit of all.

In conclusion, the South Bay Historical Society is poised for an exciting transformation for the New Year. Through community engagement, technological innovation, and a commitment to preserving and celebrating the past, the society is set to become a beacon of historical appreciation, guiding South Bay San Diego County into a future where the roots of the community are cherished, understood, and celebrated by all.



To Our Members,

“Thank you for joining our South Bay Historical Society. We look forward to seeing you at a future event.”

Welcome new Board Members:

- **Francia Castro- Vice President and Historic Home Tours Director.**
- **Aurora Dolopo- Membership Director.**
- **Anna Yanin- Secretary.**

<https://southbayhistoricalsociety.org/about-us/board-of-directors/>

Marie Zhivago

*President
South Bay Historical Society
2023-2024*



Photo credit:
Jack Gechter

SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL SIGNS

Historic Route California US 101

The Journey Continues



“Thirteen new Historic California US 101 Route Signs have debuted in San Ysidro and Chula Vista, marking where the legendary highway once ran through the South Bay. The signs recall a time when motorists relied on old Highway 101 to travel from San Diego down to Mexico.

The signs, recently installed by the City of San Diego and Chula Vista, are part of a project undertaken by the South Bay Historical Society, led by Jack Gechter. Seven additional signs have been created for National City.” - **Richard Schulte**, www.coolsandiegosights.com

CHULA VISTA

The City of Chula Vista has all of their (6) Historic California US 101 Route signs up.

The location(s) of the Historic California US 101 Route Sign(s) in the City of Chula Vista are:

- 1655 Broadway, ... North Bound
- 979 Broadway, ... North Bound
- 471 Broadway, ... North Bound
- 36 Broadway, ... South Bound
- 580 Broadway, (Walgreens Store) ... South Bound
- 1240 Broadway (Target Store)... South Bound



Jack Gechter -PLS
South Bay
Historical Society
BOARD MEMBER





Photo credit:
Jack Gechter



SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego showing the proposed locations for their (7) Historic California US 101 Route Sign(s) along Beyer Blvd

LOCATION: 2500blk BEYER BLVD - 3000blk E. BEYER BLVD (SN: 40300747642, 40300747643, 40300747644)

1. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FNBT (2706 EAST BEYER BL)
2. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FEBT (4103 BEYER BL)
3. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FWBT (4050 BEYER BL)
4. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FSBT (3127 BEYER BL)
5. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FNBT (3364 BEYER BL)
6. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FNBT (2699 BEYER BL)
7. INSTALL HISTORIC 101 ROUTE SIGN ON EXISTING STREETLIGHT POLE FSBT (2562 BEYER BL)





San Diego County Insectary

From 1890 till World War II many of the San Diego suburbs were primarily agricultural communities. Many areas including Chula Vista's first main product included lemons followed later by "truck farming" which featured celery, tomatoes and cucumbers.

1918 saw Greg Cox's grandfather, George Cox, move to Chula Vista to become the manager of the Sunkist lemon packing plant on the southeast corner of Third Avenue and K Street.

In 1926, San Diego County built an Insectary at 511 G Street in Chula Vista. An insectary is where they grow insects which will feed upon insects that could be harmful to the crop.



*Article by:
Harry Orgovan
Historian
South Bay Historical Society*

After World War II a housing boom took place through-out the county. Homes and businesses replaced lemon groves, tomato and celery fields. The need of the insectary for agricultural application no longer existed.

The county in 1995, under the leadership of county Supervisor Greg Cox, with the help of Frank Roseman and others, turned the insectary into a museum.

Currently the museum is closed, but the South Bay Historical Society is checking with the Agricultural Department to arrange a visit. Stay tuned.

The Loss of the San Ysidro Hotel



It is with profound sorrow that we bring to your attention a recent and deeply troubling incident that has profoundly impacted our community's steadfast commitment to preserving its rich cultural and historic heritage.

Jack Gechter, representing the Friends of San Ysidro, has brought to our attention the distressing news of the illegal demolition of the early 20th-century San Ysidro Hotel, situated at 133 W. San Ysidro Boulevard, in late June 2023.



The community had been actively engaged in efforts to secure a place for this cherished site on the City of San Diego's Register of Historical Resources, recognizing its profound significance in our shared history.



Unfortunately, our worst fears were confirmed when the City of San Diego acknowledged that no permits had been granted for the demolition, rendering this act a **blatant violation of the tireless efforts to safeguard our cultural landmarks.**

In response to this egregious incident, the **Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO)** took swift action by notifying both the city's Historical Resources and Code Enforcement authorities. An immediate investigation has been launched, with officials expressing a commitment to conducting a thorough review to uncover the circumstances surrounding this unlawful act.

More updates on any developments in this matter. We stand in solidarity with all those who mourn the loss of the San Ysidro Hotel, appreciating its historical and cultural significance.

In the pursuit of justice, we earnestly hope that the ongoing investigation will yield meaningful results, and proactive measures will be put in place to prevent the recurrence of such devastating events in the future.



Jack Gechter –PLS
South Bay
Historical Society
BOARD MEMBER



*Photos Courtesy of:
Friends of San Ysidro,
Jack Gechter.
More information on:*

Kimball Museum

On October 25, 1980, a significant moment in National City's history unfolded as the City, in collaboration with the Community Development Commission of the City of National City, formally dedicated the Frank A. Kimball House, a cornerstone of Heritage Square. Situated between 9th Street and Plaza Boulevard along "A" Avenue, Heritage Square encapsulates a cherished piece of local history.

Gracing the easterly side of "A" Avenue are architectural gems such as the Kimball House, the Elizur-Steele-Crandall-Ennis House, and the Proctor House. Across the street on the westerly side stands Brick Row, a distinguished ten-unit row house crafted by the Kimball Brothers, proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Notably, the street in front of these historic houses underwent meticulous reconstruction, visually harmonizing with the architectural grandeur of these time-honored structures.

Kimball Square is an integral component of the Center City Redevelopment Project, a transformative initiative financed with Community Development Block Grant Funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



The realization of Heritage Square, and the preservation of these architectural treasures, owes its existence to this crucial financial support, as well as the unwavering backing of the City Council and the Community Development Commission Members. Their support has not only ensured the preservation of our cultural heritage but has also contributed to the revitalization and visual coherence of this historically significant area.

As we reflect on this milestone from October 25, 1980, we recognize that without such collaborative efforts and financial assistance, the creation of Heritage Square and the restoration of these architectural gems would not have been possible. This dedication to preserving our heritage stands as a testament to the foresight and commitment of all involved parties.



SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL PLACES NATIONAL CITY



Heritage Park Square

Kimball Museum is here in Heritage Park. Our city's Victorian-era architecture is in full display here. National City was once home to more Victorian-era houses per capita than any other town in all of San Diego County?

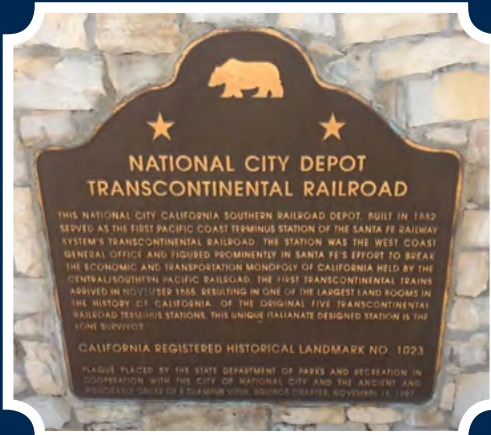
On the easterly side of "A" Avenue the Elizur-Steele-Crandall-Ennis House, and the Proctor House.

On the westerly side of "A" Avenue is Brick Row, a ten unit row house which was built by the Kimball Brothers and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The street in front of these houses was reconstructed to visually coordinate with these historic buildings. Register of Historic Places. The street in front of these houses was reconstructed to visually coordinate with these historic buildings.

<https://www.nationalcityca.gov/services/historic-sites>



SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL PLACES NATIONAL CITY



National City Depot

Visit the last standing original train station on the West Coast.

If your little ones love model trains, then the National City Depot (built in 1882) is the place to be.

The San Diego Electric Railway Association operates the historic National City Depot as a museum. Check out a three-rail model train layout that volunteers will happily operate for you. The adjacent room is the museum portion of the depot with historic photos and railroad-related artifacts. The kids can play in and around several street cars on display outside of the depot. There is no set admission fee, but donations are appreciated.

922 W. 23rd Street
National City, California
619-474-4400
<https://www.sdera.org>



Granger Hall

Is now seriously in danger of being demolished although the City is trying to move it to a park.

It is currently located at 1700 E. 4th St. in National City, California. Please drive by and give us ideas on saving it.

Granger Hall was built in 1898 as an “acoustically perfect” music auditorium addition to a smaller music room in the Paradise Valley estate of Ralph Granger. Granger made a fortune in the “Last Chance” silver mine in Colorado during the 1890s. The building, moved later, has also been known as Granger Music Hall. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.[1][2]

It was originally an 80-by-32-foot (24.4 m × 9.8 m) room. It was designed by architect Irving Gill who learned acoustical technique working under Adler and Sullivan. The acoustic properties include a design having no parallel walls or surfaces, including having the floor slope slightly forward and the ceiling and walls having “a slight canter”. The ceiling has a 75-foot (23 m) mural of Euterpe, Greek goddess of music, and cherubs.



SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL PLACES NATIONAL CITY

Stein Farm

Part museum, part community gardens, The Stein Family Farm is fun for the whole family! Take a tour on Saturdays between 10:00am - 2:00pm where volunteers take you through the first floor of the Victorian farmhouse built around 1900, for a peek in the old barn and stables, and around the gardens and orchard. Park your car on F Avenue. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged.

www.thesteinfamilyfarm.com

1808 F Avenue (at 18th Street)

National City, Ca

619-477-4113





SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL PLACES NATIONAL CITY



Olivewood Gardens

a mini self-guided walking tour of Victorian-era homes. Park the car at Olivewood Gardens (street parking is suggested), and if the grounds are open, wander around the gardens and peek inside the windows of the Noyes house, a Princess Anne Victorian. From there, head north on N Avenue, and then walk east on 24 th Street about half a block. At 1433 24 th St. you'll find the Dickinson-Boal house in the Queen Anne style, built in 1887.

Mr. William Dickinson owned the home, which then passed to his daughter and her husband, John and Mary Boal. At 1430 24 th St. is a Victorian that once belonged to Wallace Dickinson, who built his home across the street from his father's home, also in 1887. Next, head back to 24 th Street and walk north on N Avenue to 22nd Street. Walking east, halfway down the block at 1504 22 nd St. is the D.K. Horton house designed by famous architect Irving Gill, built in 1895.

<http://www.olivewoodgardens.org>



SOUTH BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHULA VISTA HISTORICAL HOMES TEA PARTY GALLERY 2023

We would love to share your photos, please submit any photos to thesouthbayhistoricalsociety@gmail.com



South Bay Historical Society



Eventbrite link: <https://qr.page/g/1nclJMrBzuL>

October 28th, 2023 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Norman Park Senior Center

270 F St. Chula Vista, CA 91910

www.southbayhistoricalsociety.org

Thank you

The Chula Vista Historic Homes Tea Party was a success and so much fun! Current Members, we love and appreciate all your years and support. New members, welcome aboard, we cannot wait to see you at another event! We truly enjoyed all the stories and memories you shared with us about your family history.

We are looking forward to a unique and educational experience with all the history Chula Vista has to offer.

Thank you to our former councilwoman, Jill Galvez, for attending and presenting her historic home. Thank you to our Board Members past and present. We really appreciate all the help with setting up and packing up all 50 tea-sets!

Marie our new SBHS President and Francia our new Vice-President, for all the hard work and time you both put into this event.

Thank you, Olivia Guinn Home Loans for sponsoring this event. We are so grateful for your help and involvement.

<https://oliviaguinnhomeloans.com>



South Bay Historical Society



- Declutter ✓
- Repair ✓
- Remodel ✓
- Stage ✓

— THINKING ABOUT MAKING A MOVE?

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The story of OH! San Diego



National City Historical Society- We are going to be open from 10-4pm on March 10th, as part of the Architectural Foundation Open House !

OH! San Diego was founded in 2015 by Susanne Friestedt, a native San Diegan and Point Loma resident, as her way of giving back to her hometown in a meaningful, lasting way. San Diego is the third city in the United States to become an official Open House Worldwide City, joining New York and Chicago in this distinction.

<https://sdarchitecture.org/programs/open-house/about-oh/>



The 1887 Stick-style Rice-Proctor House in National City's Heritage Square.



Brick Row at National City's Heritage Square. The long brick two-story structure was built by Frank Kimball in 1887

The annual event offers a rare behind-the-scenes look at the iconic, cutting-edge and historical buildings that shape our city's DNA. Each site is chosen for its unique contribution through architectural design, historic value, cultural significance, repurposing of space or environmental sustainability.

While enjoying your own custom tours of the best of San Diego's architecture, we invite you to reflect on how these buildings and spaces reflect the challenges and opportunities presented by our history, culture and geography. It's your city! Treasure it!

National City Historical Society
www.nationalcityhistoricalsociety.com

Join our Society!

NANCY ESTOLANO
PRESIDENT / SECRETARY



The Steele-Blossom House, built in 1879, is used by the city of National City in its official logo. Elizur Steele was real estate agent for Frank Kimball and his enterprising brothers.



The 1869 Kimball house was moved to Heritage Square in 1975. It is now the Kimball Museum operated by the National City Historical Society.

THANK YOU MARCIA BRISTOL FAMILY DONATION

Marcia Bristol, a beloved Chula Vista High School employee for many years, sadly passed away. Her family donated to **South Bay Historical Society**, these amazing historical photos reprinted on poster sized canvas frames (pictured below).

We really appreciate **Nurse Jessica Starr** at Chula Vista High School, for all her assistance in the safe keeping and transport of these historical photo canvases safe from the recent winter storm. In addition to the photos we received photos of the past and a lovely 1961 Chula Vista Sweater. These pieces will go into storage and archived in hopes to hang them once again for exhibition. Ms. Bristol's care and consideration for the City of Chula Vista's historic visual arts and legacy will be shared with future generations.





Contribute Historical Content and Become a Valued Member

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