



# The Hourglass

Editor: Bob Tyler

Winter 2017

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*The Mission of the Historical Society of Palm Desert*

*To collect, preserve and record the history of our city and communities and to provide access to the society's archives and artifacts through exhibits, publications, programs and events.*

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## Interview with Gloria Petitto

by Brett Romer

Gloria - I was born in July of 1926, the youngest of 12 Children, my sister was the oldest, then there were ten boys, and then myself. We all joked about everybody in Harrison County knowing how old I was 'cause everybody in town was excited about this little girl being born after ten boys. We lived in a small town called Mount Clare, West Virginia. Our town was a hub of about twelve or fifteen coal mines, we had a big hotel and a train station, and we had a company store that all the miners used. The miners didn't have money, they had what they called "script," which was like money. The company store was very well supplied, you could buy anything from food to furniture. There were several independent stores too. Mount Clare had a diverse population of people who had immigrated to America, we were Italian. My parents were married in Italy when they were teenagers, and then they came here about a year later. They went to West Virginia because my father was interested in mining, he was particularly interested in mining safety. Before I was born they had lived in different little mining towns, they moved to Mt. Clare when my brother Arthur was a baby. Six of us were born in our home in Mount Clare. My father became a citizen soon after he arrived here, and he was instrumental in many other people becoming U. S. citizens.

During WWII I attended Lost Creek High School which was about three miles from our home, and since it was a farming town, and most of the fathers were in the service, the kids had to do the farming. We'd



start school at 7:00 in the morning, so that by noon we were finished, and then they'd go home and work their farms until after dark. I went to college and became a teacher, and I taught for thirty six years all together. I taught in West Virginia and then I taught in Marietta Ohio, then I worked for the Department of Defense and taught in Germany for three years, and then I was in Japan for a year, after that, I went back home and then I came out to California in 1968. I don't know why I moved to California, I just don't handle sameness well, just palm trees, and just one season so to speak, and that bothered me for quite some time, but I was very busy

with my teaching, and I was the hostess at the restaurant that Pete and I had. My brother Ernie came out here in 1970, if he hadn't been here I would have moved back home to West Virginia.

Brett – When did your brother Pete come out here?

Gloria - His last assignment in the service was in Los Angeles, he headed a special education program, and during furloughs he would come out here to the desert. In those years Palm Springs had the El Mirador Hotel and the Chi Chi Club, and there was very little in Palm Desert, just Highway 111, and a few stores here and there, but he fell in love with it. Pete told me; "When the war is over and I'm though with the service, I'm moving to the valley." Pete stayed in L. A. until about 1947, and then moved here. Pete had met a lot of friends down here, one being Travis Rogers who had a dude ranch in the area we use to call "the back way to the airport." He had big cabanas, the Hollywood set came there and the guys would take them out horseback riding, they had entertainment, and it was really country and western back then. It was a good place for celebrities to let their hair down and enjoy themselves without anybody bothering them or wanting an autograph. But since I've been here, most people don't bother celebrities, whoever they are. Trav also had a nightclub at the Salton Sea that looked like a ship, it was at North Shore and it had big portholes, and I think it's still there, but when I came it was the "in place" to go, we would go down there and Pete would help cook. Then when the Palm Springs Ariel Tramway was being built Trav and Pete took food up the mountain on horses to feed the men who were building the tram. Then when Travis became ill they closed up the club. About that time Pete, because of his close association with Bing Crosby, became the construction manager of Crosby's Blue Skies trailer village in Rancho Mirage.

Brett - What was your brother's connection with Bing Crosby?

Gloria - Well, Pete first met Bing through Bill Morrow the script writer, Bill was in Pete's company during the war, and they liked to joke about Pete making Bill toe the line and wear his uniform all the time, and stuff like that. Then Bill introduced him to a lot of celebrities, and anybody who had any talent for the Command Performance Radio Program, and for some reason he and Crosby became very good friends, and Pete was very fond of Dixie, Bing's first wife, and when he met the boys they were little and Lindsay, I think he was maybe four years old, had a basketball that was bigger than him and was trying to put it up into the hoop. That was the first time he met Lindsay, but he had met all the other boys and he spent a lot of time with them at their home. About that time he also met Jack Benny, and the Army had made Frank Capra a Colonel, and put him in charge of the Command Performance Program. Jack Benny and several other celebrities took Pete under their wing. Frank Capra hated the Command Performance Program, so they were looking for somebody to take it over. Pete had been sent to a

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special school in Fort Benning, Georgia, and then he was sent to Fort McClellan in Alabama and there he was chosen from a group of young men to be in charge of Command Performance. During that time he and Frank Capra became very good friends. Capra became like a father to Pete, but after that Pete became tired of the service and wanted out. My mother wanted him to stay in the service, and by that time he had become a lieutenant colonel, but he said no, he was finished with it. After that, Pete had a lot of different jobs, but he had always wanted a restaurant, because all of us were good cooks, we had all learned to cook as kids, we had learned to do everything in the kitchen, so he was several steps ahead of the game. Pete was very knowledgeable and artistic, and so he did very well. We had our restaurant for about four years, it was called "Pete Petitto's," but it was ahead it's time, it was very elegant, very up scale, we designed the menu, and everything was handmade, and it had a gorgeous dining room.

Brett – Where was that restaurant located?

Gloria – It was next door to Erik's Furniture in Rancho Mirage, we had bought that corner piece of property. It had an Italian porch on the street side, so it seemed as if it was right on the street, we had planted Italian Cyprus trees that separated it from the highway. But it was tough because it was just the wrong time, if it was in business today it would be fantastic.

Pete was looking for something to do, so I dug around in his files and found his teaching certificate; he was certified in public speaking, journalism, drama and the arts, so I sent it in to Sacramento and it came back with a four year provisional. So I brought it home and handed it to him and I told him "I got you a job, you have a four year provisional to teach." Then he told me that he couldn't teach, and I said "Why can't you teach? You couldn't cook and you learned to cook, and you do all these other things." So, I went down to Desert Sands School District office and a friend of mine was working in administration there, so I told him that Pete needed a job and that I hoped he could use him for substitute teaching, and so he did. Pete substituted at every level, and I was so proud of him, he did very well. Around that time the College of the Desert went into the Hotel and Restaurant Management, Pete had started substituting in Palm Springs and later he taught restaurant classes at Indio High School. He even had a café on campus for teaching students the restaurant trade.

Brett – What's the history on this area up here generally known as the compound?

Gloria - Way before all of this was built, Bing had a house at Thunderbird Heights, and there weren't very many houses up there, but his wife Dixie died before it was finished, so she never saw that house. Bing came down here very rarely, but at that time they were broadcasting their radio shows from the El Mirador Hotel in Palm Springs, so Bing and all the other entertainers were down here more often. People started building more houses up there near Bing, and so he said to Pete "I want you to find me a piece of property here in the desert where nobody can build around me, people are buying up all the property around me and building houses." I don't know how long it took Pete to find this property, at that time the area here was very sparse. Pete knew a realtor named Adrian Schwelk who sold property around Silver Spur, and so he contacted him, the woman who owned this property up here was named Jones and so Pete dealt with her. Pete and Adrian became very good friends, so Pete called Bing and

told him that he had found some property that he might be interested in. Bing had this thing about being alone, I don't know why it was so important to him 'cause Bing was rarely here, but he came up here and walked the property, it was sixteen acres. Bing fell in love with the property, and he liked the wash 'cause it kept people away. All the land around there where Iron Wood is now, was vacant and it was far away from everything. Then, Phil Harris got into the act and he bought ten acres across the road from Bing; Phil was going to build a fabulous house up here, but then his wife Alice Fay told him, "I'm not going to live up there," and she never did. There's two beautiful big trees up there that were going to be at the driveway to his house, it's now part of Iron Wood, and so that ten acres and the sixteen acres, were bought at the same time. I don't know how much they paid for the property, but it was little or nothing in those days. Phil Harris left his property vacant, he came up to visit once in a while but never develop it. Then Jimmy Van Heusen, the composer, and Bill Morrow, the script writer, and Bing and Pete, all got together and talked about it. So Bing bought the property, and then he sold two acres or so to Jimmy Van Heusen, Bill Morrow and Pete. While they were looking at the property, Pete had picked out this piece of property for Bing's home, but then Bing said "No Pete, I'll build up here, and you build down below," as if this property was down in a hole. So then Pete said "No Problem Bing, you take what you want and then divvy up the other acreage." But I think, and Pete thought, that this is the best piece of property in the area, and Pete was very wise about putting the house on the end of the property, and having all the open property in the front.

These four houses were built at the same time. Three of the houses were very simple and efficient, Jimmy Van Heusen's house had one very large living room and two very small bedrooms, but it had a very nice working kitchen, and he had his baby grand piano there, and there was a bar and a dining room table and a big fireplace, and that's where he lived and entertained. Then Bill Morrow's house had a breezeway that divided the bedroom from the living quarters. Pete's house was just a single bedroom bachelor home, until I came and added the glassed-in patio and my suite. So Jimmy Van Heusen lived here until he sold, and then he built a house up on the mountain in Pinyon Crest, and he and Frank Sinatra had a chopper, and that's how he got to his house. Then when Bill Morrow passed away, Pete was in charge of renting out his house, and so he rented it to a man who worked for the telephone company, and was very interested in making pottery and even had a kiln up here, but then he was transferred to Arizona. Then some friends of ours from West Virginia bought it, but didn't use it, so then Pete talked Phil Harris into buying it. Phil and his buddies had been using the clubhouse at Thunderbird for their poker games, and the people at Thunderbird weren't happy about that, so Pete told him "Buy this house and we'll enclose the car port between the bedroom and the living room, you're not going to sleeping here anyway, so we'll make you an office, so you and your friends can play poker, swim and have jam sessions up here, and so the people at Thunderbird will be happy, Alice will be happy, and you'll be happy too." So, it became a wonderful big room there, and a barber friend of Phil's sent him an antique barber chair, and somebody from down south sent him six rocking chairs, and I talked him out of one of them, but it was wonderful for him, and he was up here quite a lot.

After Bill Morrow died, we became the only permanent residents here, and then some people bought the Van Heusen house and have lived here permanently, and since then Crosby's house has been sold several times. I doubt that Bing spent a whole month at his house here during the time that he owned it. Some nuns used it every summer as a retreat which was quite nice, and it was good for them. Then Moselle Zeiger, who was Bing's financial secretary, used it quite a lot and she and Pete became good

friends. Then in 1957 when Bing married Kathryn, they were in Las Vegas, and Bing called Pete to tell him that they had just gotten married and that they would be flying in later that day, he asked Pete to pick them up at the airport, and so Pete got Bing's house clean and aired out, and they were here for three or four days. But Kathryn didn't like the desert at all, and of course a lot of people don't like the desert. I think it's too bad that Bing didn't really enjoy the house here more than he did, but again he didn't enjoy the house at Thunderbird Heights either. At that time Bing was busy working and playing golf, but at one point in his life, he thought that he would spend several months a year down here. I think it's unfortunate that he was so strict with the boys, and they weren't allowed to come down here.

Every summer they all went to the ranch at Elko Nevada, and Pete would go too. The kids would stay in the bunkhouse with the ranchers, and they were there all summer. Pete loved it there, and they all worked hard, but it was good healthy work. That when Pete became so close and fond of Bing's kids, and he had such a good rapport with them. We were from a big family and Pete was used to being with lots of kids, and even today when I see a baby in a buggy, I'll walk over to it and I talk to it, and the mother too.

There's still a lot of property behind me that could be built on, so after I'm gone and the property is sold, people can build more houses up here.

Brett – Your Street is named “JFK Trail.” Why is it JFK Trail?

Gloria – Pete named all these streets; he named it JFK Trail because President Kennedy stayed in the Crosby house, and the head of the Secret Service stayed here in a trailer. Lindsay Crosby, the youngest of Bing's boys, was living with Pete at the time that John Kennedy was here. But then Pete and Lindsay stayed down at John Martino's hotel, but Pete came up here every day. When Pete came up here he was frisked by the Secret Service, and he got sick and tired of that, so then later when Bing called Pete and told him that Kennedy was coming to stay a second time, Pete said “No, they can't stay at my house, I don't like all that frisking business.” So when President Kennedy did come, the Secret Service guy asked “Where are the Secret Service guys going to stay?” Pete told them “Pull your trailers up behind Crosby's house, there's water outlets up there.” So, they didn't stay in this house, they stayed in their trailers up behind the Crosby house and the president stayed in Bing's house. So that's why it's called JFK Trail.

The road that leads to the house is called “Della Robbia St.” because there's a famous sculpture that's called Della Robbia, which means the blessed mother. The Hertz family gave a copy of that statue to Bing when he built the house, and so Pete had a niche made for it. So that's where the name Della Robbia came from, and then the road in front here Pete named “Crosby Lane” for Bing and the boys. The only way in here was off of Hwy 74, and it was a dirt road that Pete called “Carriage Trail” that intersects with Iron Tree which is the main road to the Iron Wood Country Club, but it was all open out here. Then Bing had two big gates put up, and so Pete told him “You don't think I'm going to get out of my car every day and open those gates to come through here when you could drive a steamroller on either side?” So Pete just left one side open, and leaned the other half of the gate up against it. So then after wearing out several sets of tires, driving through the rocks, he had Bing put in a little strip of blacktop from Hwy 74 up to the house. Then Pete, Bill Morrow and Jimmy Van Heusen, made a little track into Silver Spur Trail, about where the fire station is located now. So when I moved here, if I was

going to the right, I went on Silver Spur Trail, and if I was going to my left, I would go to Hwy 74. At that time Silver Spur was very sparsely populated, and they were older people, and they would buy bags of blacktop and do their own patching and road maintenance. So, they got really tired of the three guys using their road and they finally put up a little rinky-dinky fence across there, and being as ugly as people get, including myself, we drove around that little fence and we still used Silver Spur Trail. But at that point we started giving them some money for road maintenance. Then in about 1973, Iron Wood Country Club was built, and Silver Spur was developing rapidly too.

When Pete got sick I began to realize that the lord had sent me out here to take care of him, and so I'd say that that's really why I'm here.



Phil Crosby, Phil Franklin, Pete Petitto

## **PURPLE HILLS ESTATES SOUTH PALM DESERT DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY 1960'S**

**by Merilee Colton**

*This article is the first in a three-part series about the Purple Hills Estates homes that were constructed in South Palm Desert in the early 1960's. The series will feature biographies about the developer, the builder and the architect. The research is a work in progress, and anyone with additional information is urged to contact the author through the Historical Society.*

Unlike most of the homes in Palm Desert in the 1950's and 60's , the Purple Hills Estates homes were "tract" homes, albeit designed with a custom look. They came in several facades, including the "Parthenon" with columns in front and the "Fontainebleau" with a mansard roof. Common to all is the deep entryway at the front, often covered in stone; double front doors, many of which have a decorative

block pattern design; and large rectangular chimneys of cement block. The model home was located at 72-792 Bursera Way, and still has its original doors.

The Purple Hills Estates homes were not built as a contiguous tract development but were scattered singly or in small groups among existing custom homes and vacant lots in South Palm Desert. They can be seen primarily on Tamarisk, Goldflower, Salt Cedar and Shadow Mountain, with a few on Joshua Tree and Bursera. At present there have been 43 homes identified; these same designs can be seen in Indian Wells and Palm Springs.

The Architectural Committee for the Palm Desert Improvement Association, the predecessor to the Palm Desert Property Owners Association, strongly discouraged tract housing anywhere in Palm Desert, and especially homes built south of El Paseo where large lots and architect designed homes were the norm. In the early 1960's the Palm Desert Sales Company wanted approval from the PDIA to sell 30 lots in the vicinity of Tamarisk Street. The Architectural Committee refused to approve the sale, believing that it was a tract development, but the company manager sold the lots anyway. In response the Architectural Committee resigned en masse.

The PDIA minutes don't reveal the purchaser, but the timing, size and location points to the Purple Hills Estate homes developer J. C. Dunas, doing business in Palm Desert as Jay-Cee Investment Company.

#### The Developer

In the late 1950's and early 60's some of the developers and builders who had been successful in Palm Springs with tracts of mid-century modern and contemporary desert ranch homes began looking at Palm Desert for their next projects. J. C. (Joseph Cassel, or Joe) Dunas was one.

Born in Chicago in 1900 (d. 1987) to Russian and Lithuanian parents, Joe Dunas was one of four children. His two brothers were also entrepreneurs. His brother Arthur developed several neighborhoods in Highland Park on the North Shore of Chicago in the 1920's. A headline from the real estate section of the Chicago Tribune proclaimed; "Arthur Dunas to Open His 35<sup>th</sup> Subdivision." Arthur and his brother Alvin were also involved in the Florida land boom.

In the 1920's Joe was married and in business in Chicago with his brother-in-law, as the Cole and Dunas Music Company, importers, manufactures and distributors of musical instruments and credited with offering the first portable phonograph, the "Lark." In 1927 Joe wrote a book; "New Slow Method Strokes for Ukulele."

In 1931 the business was sold and Joe and his growing family moved to Los Angeles. Joe became a real estate agent, broker and developer of apartment buildings. By the time WWII ended and the post – WWII housing boom began in Southern California, he was well positioned to become a developer of housing tracts in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley, as well as in Orange and Riverside counties. Joe partnered in these ventures with his son Ron, sons-in-law Stuart Swindler and Morton Greene, and George and Bob Alexander.

George Alexander of Palm Springs fame was born in 1899 in New York, of Russian and Polish parents. He and his wife were living in Los Angeles by 1935. Granddaughter Jill Kitnick remembers that George got involved in real estate through a friend, developer Joe Dunas.

Joe Dunas' partnership with the Alexanders continued for decades, beginning in Los Angeles and moving to the desert when Alexander did, though they continued to build in Los Angeles and Orange counties. The friendly partnership extended to George's son Bob Alexander, who knew Ron Dunas and Stuart Swindler from college and socially.

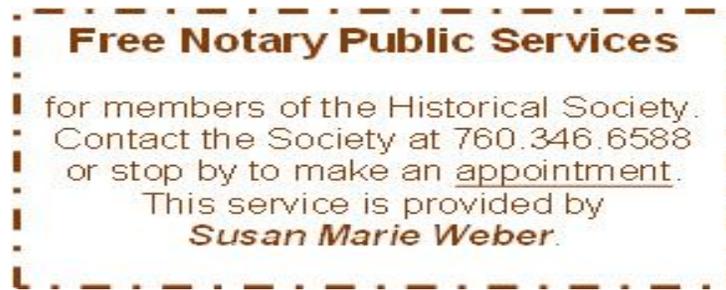
Joe Dunas and George Alexander built "dingbats" in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley, so named because, like most developers at the time, they put up cheap housing quickly for the returning vets with little thought to design. Bob Alexander and Ron Dunas were acquainted with architect William (Bill) Krisel, then also in his twenties, and who also wanted to build housing in a modern design. Bob and Ron Dunas convinced their fathers to test whether these houses would sell as well as the "dingbats" and still make money. So George gave Bob 10 lots, and Joe gave Ron 12 lots in the San Fernando Valley, and Bob and Ron built the Krisel-designed houses and sold them for more money than the dingbats.

Three of the notable projects in Palm Springs developed by the Alexander-Dunas partnership were the Ocotillo Lodge, Twin Palms and Vista Las Palmas. When the Ocotillo Lodge opened, the Los Angeles Times headlined an article about the Ocotillo, "The Boy Wonder Builders from Los Angeles," referring to George Alexander and Joe Dunas.

Joe Dunas invested in many Palmer and Krisel designed, Alexander built housing developments, but preferred a more traditional look with a larger footprint, believing that not everyone was enamored with modernity in housing. Similar to the Dunas-built houses in Vista Las Palmas, the Purple Hills Estates homes are a blend of the desert modern style with the more traditional ranch, featuring extended rooflines and walls of glass.

Today Joe Dunas is not as well-known as his accomplishments warrant, and his involvement in building out a significant portion of South Palm Desert was, until recently virtually unknown. Two articles in future issues of The Hourglass will present the biographies of the other men involved in the Purple Hills Estate Homes; Torrey Spannagel, builder and Charles E. DuBois, architect.





## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT AND THE FRIENDS OF THE DESERT MOUNTAINS**

### **2016-2017 LECTURE SERIES**

This six event lecture series will be a joint effort between HSPD and FDM and will be used as both an Informational and Docent Training Series. The lectures are held at Palm Desert Community Center, 45-480 Portola Avenue, Palm Desert (N/E corner of Portola and Shadow Mountain Drive) at 7:00 PM. Coffee and cookies are served, with a recommended donation of \$5. For additional information call the Historical Society at (760) 346-6588. A slide show of historic photos will showing between 6:00 and 7:00 PM. This event is open to the public

**Friday January 27<sup>th</sup>** - Mr. Michael Mirelez will present "Cahuilla Bird Songs and Peon Game"

**Friday February 24<sup>th</sup>** - Ms. Judy Stapp will present "The Start of Indian Gaming"

**Friday March 24<sup>th</sup>** - Mr. Danial McCarthy will present "Some Plants Utilized by the Cahuilla Indians"

### **CVAS MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2017**

**January 19, 2017** Sherri Gust: Paleontologist/Archaeologist "Zanja Madre" The *Zanja Madre* (Mother Ditch) is the original aqueduct that brought water to the Pueblo de Los Angeles from the Rio Porciuncula (Los Angeles River).

**February 16, 2017** Albert Chacon – Film Producer – "WE ARE BIRDS" (Cupeno-Cahuilla-Apache) is a photographer and documentarian with over 10 years' experience in his craft. This 1 hour film is "A California Indian Story". We will also have several Tribal Bird Singers here to sing and answer questions.

**March 16, 2017** Ruth Nolan – Author/Professor/Photographer "Fire On The Mojave"

**April 20, 2017** Mary Gordon – TBA

**May 13** – Saturday Symposium

## PRESIDENTS LETTER NUMBER 2

This is my second Presidents Letter. It has been a very interesting adventure over the past five and a half months. I can only hope that things have been working well for everyone.

I would like to express my appreciation to Brett Romer for all of his hard work. His help has come through his useful suggestions, useful ideas, and especially his computer help. Brett's help has been very appreciated in developing a power point presentation for the lecture on the History of the Santa Rosa Indian Reservation that I gave for our November lecture. I couldn't have done it without him.

The lecture series with "Friends of the Desert Mountains" has been a very successful venture for both organizations. Our lectures have been well attended and have been have helped them train their docents about the local Cahuilla. I hope we can look forward to a continued working relationship in the future.

I would also like to thank all those who worked on the Yard Sale, it was another successful venture. I especially need to thank Adele and her "girls" (Bonnie, Sandy, Kay, and Rose) for their work throughout the summer pricing items. They continued their work right up until the day of the sale. Without all their pricing we would not have been ready for such a big sale.

I also need to thank Suzanne for all of her help with the Yard Sale. She was instrumental in seeing that everything got taken out of the bin and put into its proper place in the Sales Yard. All her help is greatly appreciated.

My thanks must also go to Merilee for all her help running the Yard Sale and for her work cleaning up the office files. It was a very busy summer for her and Susan Marie and the work has not stopped yet. She and Susan Marie have been working hard so that we can obtain the house that was donated to us. We only have a couple more weeks to get things ironed out as we must take possession before the end of the year. We made it! More information to follow.

Special thanks go to Nerl, Richard and Hal for doing pickups, to Hal for doing deliveries; to Don for placing and removing tables and doing yard cleanup; to Rob and the Boy Scouts for their work taking peoples purchases out for them; to those who brought food for the crew; to all those who worked the Yard sale.

We've recently received a box of Cliff Henderson items from the Cleveland National Air Show. The material consists of photos, newspaper articles, and some 16 mm film reels. Brett tells me that we have a number of old film reels in our archives, and so I would like to see them transferred to DVD, rather than just storing them in our archives to slowly decompose. Since we can't view these films in their present form, we need to preserve them in a usable and stable form, and I think this is a great place to start. I've had great personal success with Johnson's Photo in Indio in printing slides, old negatives as well as transferring old 16 mm movie film to DVDs, so I would like to see us start here and have any usable portions of these recently received films transcribed onto DVDs. If we don't do this, they will just take up space and gradually degrade. We are looking for financial assistance for this project. If you would like to help out, please let me know.

If I have missed a personal thanks you to anyone I am sorry. I will try to keep things running and I look forward to all your help in the coming year.

As we move forward we need to keep our goals and objectives in mind and that we need to work together to achieve them. We have a great Board of Directors that is committed to the success of this organization. We are in the process of assigning chairs to the various committees to cover the many necessary activities required to make this organization function. I am looking forward to an active and productive year. The list of committee and committee chairs will be available on our web site in the near future.

At this time I wish to send "get well" wishes to Bonnie Bowie who recently broke her arm and is recovering at home.

## **BIRTH OF A TOWN**

Painting by Ron Backer

The Historical Society recently purchased the original of the adjacent painting. We had 25 original copies (20" x 24") of the painting made for resale as a fund raising activity. There will only be 25 copies and they will all be signed with a certificate of authenticity. The purchasers of the first 10 copies will have their names on a plaque associated with original which will hang in the museum. The purchase/donation price is only \$250. We will have the picture on display at the Backer show in the city's gallery, the Friday night lectures, the museum and all other activities until the 25 copies are sold.

## **PALM DESERT'S ORIGINAL PLOT PLAN**

Copies of the original Palm Desert plot plan with updated overlays are available at the museum for \$40. These reproductions are 23" by 28". This is the plan as originally drawn by Tommy Tomson and then updated with additions showing, for example, the fire station added in 1951, as well as the names of the original property owners.

## **THE FALL LUNCHEON AND MEMBER MEETING WAS HELD AT MITCH'S RESTAURANT ON EL PASEO DECEMBER 6th 2016**

Our HSPD Luncheon at Mitch's located at 73-951 El Paseo came off without a hitch, with lots of good food and good cheer. Dick Folkers and Mike Lewis were in charge of the raffle which included bottles of wine, gift certificates and olive oil. It was the best attended luncheon on record with more than eighty members. Lunch was a choice of chicken, beef sirloin, or enchiladas. A fine time was had by all. The HSPD would like to thank Mitch's Restaurant for their fine food, good service and support.

HSPD Board members who were present were: Jean Benson, Gale Broeker, Sid Burks, Merilee Colton, Buford Crites, Dick Folkers, Don Graybill, Mike Lewis, Kay McCune, Louise Neeley, Harry Quinn, Bob Tyler, Susan Marie Weber, and Pam Williams. The meeting was called to order by President Harry Quinn at 11:50 AM; Harry recognized the board members in attendance, as well as past board members and thanked them for their service and support over the last year.

NEW BUSINESS: M/S/P to approve a bylaw change that increases the size of the Board from 15 to 19 members. The meeting was adjourned by President Quinn at 12 noon.

## **DONNA MATSON WAS QUITE A WOMAN**

A graduate of U. C. Santa Barbara, Donna Matson taught elementary school worldwide, and traveled extensively in Africa, South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. She hiked and snow-skied on five continents. She has been a research diver in most of the world's oceans. She was the first American woman to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, and spent eight months lugging heavy camera gear around to do a story on Machu Picchu in Peru.....

Where did our interest in Donna come from? She passed away recently and left her Palm Desert home to the Society. Again, she was quite a woman.

More to come.....

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2017**

January 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Desert Arc Art Show and Sale.

January 27<sup>th</sup> to February 13<sup>th</sup> Coachella Valley Watercolor Society Mini Master (small images) Art Show and Sale.

January 27<sup>th</sup> Friday Night Lecture – Cahuilla Bird Songs and Peon Games 7-8 PM at the Portola Community Center

February 24<sup>th</sup> Friday Night Lecture – The Start of Indian gaming 7-8 PM at the Portola Community Center

March 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>; Kathy Hilton Art Show and Sale

March 24<sup>th</sup> Friday Night Lecture – Plants used by the Cahuilla Indians 7-8 PM at the Portola Community Center

March 26<sup>th</sup> Picnic in the Park and Annual Membership Meeting

April 22<sup>nd</sup> (tentative date) Art Appraisal Day

April 28<sup>th</sup> Friday Night Lecture – Native American Pottery Making 7-8 PM at the Portola Community Center

May 13<sup>th</sup> Coachella Valley Archaeological Society (CVAS) and HSPD – Archaeological and History Symposium – 8 AM to Noon at the Portola Community Center

May; Second Grade Tours Begin

May 30<sup>th</sup> HSPD Museum is closed for the summer (last day open is May 29<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day)

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

The following local businesses have supported the Society by taking out a membership. We encourage you to patronize them throughout the year. Be sure to mention that you know they are Historical Society members/supporters.

### **ALBERTSONS**

74590 Hwy 111  
760.346.2566

### **DESERT EMPIRE MORTGAGE**

Scott J. Simmons  
1111 E. Tahquitz Canyon, Ste 121  
Palm Springs

### **DESERT MAP & AERIAL PHOTO**

73612 Hwy 111 #6  
760.346.1101

### **EXPRESS FRAME**

74600 Hwy 111, Suite B  
760.773.9228

### **GUILLERMO'S RESTAURANTE**

72850 El Paseo Dr.  
760.341.0980

### **HIDDEN HARVEST**

87711 Peter Rabbit Lane, Coachella  
760.398.8183

### **JEFF FRISCO FOR HAIR**

73925 El Paseo Dr, #2A  
760.340.1622

### **JONATHAN & ASSOCIATES, CPA**

73301 Fred Waring  
760.341.6656

### **MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS**

Accounting Systems/Consulting  
Notary Public  
760.831.5416

### **MOLLER'S GARDEN CENTER**

72235 Painters Path

### **PALMDESERTBOOKS.COM**

Lawrence Krikorian  
805.796.5187

### **POWERS AWARDS**

41700 Corporate Way, Ste. C  
760.346.6926

### **ROVER AND ARMSTRONG, ATTORNEYS**

75100 Mediterranean  
760.346.4741

### **STEWART FINE ART**

215 W. Mission Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
805.845.0255



# These businesses support us. So let us support them



P 760.346.2566  
F 760.346.2830  
M 760.567.3431

**REX MARLOWE**  
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74590 Hwy 111  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

rex.marlowe@albertsons.com  
www.supervalu.com

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Santa Barbara, CA 93101

805 845-0255  
fax 805 845-0369

stewartfineart@cox.net

**SUE DUFFY**  
Owner

44-489 TOWN CENTER WAY, SUITE A  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA 92260  
(760) 773-9228 FAX (760) 674-0595

**Christy Porter**  
Executive Director

**Headquarters**  
85-711 Peter Rabbit Lane,  
P.O. Box 266. Coachella, CA 92236

P. 760.398.8183 P. 800.305.1422  
F. 760.398.8184

christy@hiddenharvest.org

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

**Management Essentials**

Susan Marie Weber  
**760.831.5416**

Accounting Systems | Consulting | Notary Public



## Desert Empire Mortgage

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[Scott@DesertEmpireMortgage.com](mailto:Scott@DesertEmpireMortgage.com)

1111 East Tahquitz Canyon Way Suite #121  
Palm Springs, California 92262

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Owner

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Palm Desert, CA 92260  
[www.powersawards.com](http://www.powersawards.com)

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Fax: (760) 346-0343  
[dave@powersawards.com](mailto:dave@powersawards.com)



**MOLLER'S  
GARDEN CENTER, INC.**

72-235 Painter's Path  
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### Free Notary Public Services

for members of the Historical Society.  
Contact the Society at 760.346.6588  
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This service is provided by  
**Susan Marie Weber.**

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OF PALM DESERT HISTORY



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