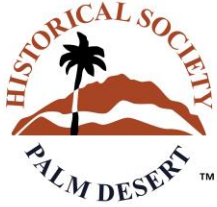


HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT



The Hourglass



Fall 2024

Ed. Merilee Colton

Museum Opens for the Season

Come visit the Firehouse Museum and see the new exhibits. Opening Day is Friday, October 4 at 10 AM. And stay with us for the season – here are some of the wonderful events in store!

<i>October 12 from 11-1 - Opening Day Reception at the Firehouse Museum, with light refreshments and docent-led tours</i>
<i>October 25 at 6 PM – Friday Night Lecture at the Spiritual Center with Luke Leuschner on the history of Palm Desert</i>
<i>October 27 from 8 AM to 2 PM – Golf Cart Parade 60th Anniversary on El Paseo, come see the fire truck!</i>
<i>November 1 at 4 PM - Cruise Night on El Paseo, also on the first Friday of every month through April with two nights a month in January, February and March, come see the fire truck!</i>
<i>November 12 from 11 AM to 2 PM – Fall Luncheon at Mitch’s on El Paseo</i>
<i>November 15 at 5:30 PM – Friday Night Lecture at the Palm Desert Library with Dr. Peter Zmolek on lithium extraction at the Salton Sea</i>
<i>January 17 at 5:30 PM – Friday Night Lecture at the Palm Desert Library with the Coachella Valley Gardening Club on Amazing Plants of the Coachella Valley</i>
<i>February 8 from 9 AM to 3 PM– Dr. George car show at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, come see the fire truck!</i>
<i>February 20 and 21 at 9 AM – Modernism Week 20th Anniversary and the “Still Living Large in Small Spaces” encore tour of South Palm Desert with the Historical Society’s Architecture and Design Committee</i>

Mid-Summer Madness Potluck

True to form, hardy year-round residents met for a delicious catered potluck and opportunity drawing in July, continuing a long Historical Society tradition.



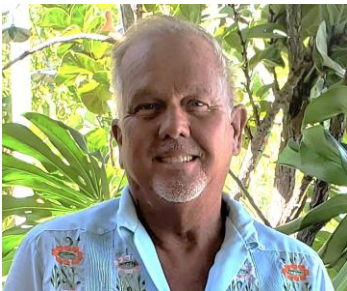
Guests at table during the drawing, prizes are in the next room

Leslie Roth and Erika Sharp at the buffet table



Steven Ludwig, Beverly James and David Toltzmann prepare the opportunity drawing tickets

President's Letter



Welcome all! As your new president, the Board and I hope to give all of you a full year of exciting events.

On Friday, October 4 the Firehouse will reopen for the season on our regular schedule, Friday through Monday from 10 AM to 3 PM every week until Memorial Day. Our official Opening Day Reception will be Saturday, October 12 from 11 AM to 1 PM. Light refreshments will be served, and all are welcome. We look forward to showing off our new Breeze Block Exhibit located in the front garden.

Our first Friday Night Lecture will be on Friday, October 25 at the Spiritual Center at 45630 Portola from 6 to 7 PM, with Luke Leuschner kicking off Modernism Week – October for the HSPD. His talk will be about the history of Palm Desert. Our subsequent lectures will be at the Palm Desert Public Library at 73300 Fred Waring Drive, from 5:30 to 6:30, usually on the third Friday of the month. Please check our BRAND-NEW WEBSITE for more speaker information and times at <https://hspd.org>.

Thank you, and hope to see you soon,

David Toltzmann

Archivist's Corner

The Archives at HSPD had an action-packed summer, with six volunteers performing a variety of tasks.

Clifford Henderson Collection

Luke Leuschner and a group of dedicated volunteers focused on the Clifford Henderson materials. We created a special collection. and to make the materials more accessible we refined the subject categories for his collection and created a new finding aid which included indexing all the original owner documentation from the Palm Desert Property Owners Association. We organized, cataloged and indexed about 10 boxes of the 30 boxes of Henderson materials. We separated all of the Hendeson aviation-related materials pending a decision if they would be more appropriately housed elsewhere.

Sandpiper Collection

One volunteer focused on the materials about Sandpiper, organizing and indexing them.

Media Collection

Several volunteers focused on the six boxes (100 items) of Audio-Visual materials that have been at our off-site storage facility at the Portola Community Center. We watched videos and listened to audio to determine the best place for them. Then we researched the items to figure out what had already been digitized and what still needed to be digitized.

Photo Collection

Several volunteers focused on the four-drawer file cabinet full of archival photos. It's a huge project, but at least we have a good start. When we are done with this file cabinet, 100% of our photo collection will be digitized.

We added fire-safe cabinets to the Archival Storage room and moved all our research files to the Archive Workroom, and we managed to fit in a few smaller projects, such as testing our new donation process and cleaning up all of the archival spaces at HSPD. We are very proud of our dedicated volunteers and how much progress we made over the summer!

We're looking forward to keeping the momentum going. "Archival Winter" is coming - we'll be identifying the people and locations in the photos and watching Cliff Henderson's home movies. Call the Firehouse at 760-346-6588 and leave a message if you would like to volunteer.

Rochelle McCune, HSPD Archivist

HSPD MISSION STATEMENT
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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“Know Your Board”

Christel Prokay



Hello! I was born in Germany in 1944, emigrated to the United States in 1963, and settled in California. After living in Indio, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage, my husband (sadly passed away) and I built our first home in Palm Desert, where I still reside.

In 1982 I received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Chapman College, after which I was a substitute teacher in Riverside County. In 1985 I started Black Forest Originals, a manufacturing and wholesale business located in Mexico. With little Spanish-speaking skills, I was still able to teach factory workers how to handcraft dolls and teddy bears. What an amazing experience, being involved with so many people for whom I cared!

In 1987 I opened "Fabric Gallery" in Palm Desert, importing and selling fabrics and accessories. In addition, I designed and sold dolls, teddy bears, and holiday decorations to major theme parks. A few years later, I was honored as a Lifetime Member of the National Registry of Who’s Who, in recognition of professional and community service.

In 2017 I founded “Protect Palm Desert Neighborhoods”, a rewarding chapter of my life, by venturing into the community: knocking on doors, and organizing and communicating about city issues with residents and city government. As a new board member of the Historical Society of Palm Desert, I am excited to start the next chapter of my life. This new assignment will allow me to continue working with wonderful and amazing people in this city, which I proudly call my home.

October and November Friday Night Lectures

Luke Leuschner



Twelve miles down Highway 111 from Palm Springs, Palm Desert is not so much a city as it is the product of a few businessmen with an aptitude for making money.

At its inception in 1946, the Palm Desert Corporation purchased 1500+ acres of raw desert, hired some of California’s greatest modernists and town planners, and built an entire city from the sand. The vision for the “modern” desert city was the result of a struggle between two brothers: Clifford Henderson, a skillful businessman behind the Pan Pacific Auditorium and the National Air Races, and Randall Henderson, the editor of the famed Desert Magazine who had an endearing passion for the arid regions of the southwest.

Cliff wanted a resort city where his fellow members of the Los Angeles elite could frolic at his gleaming Shadow Mountain Club, and Randall wanted a year-round community for the year-round people who have historically given the Coachella Valley its charm. This lecture presents this story and the history of Palm Desert told through its architecture, exhibiting designs in Palm Desert by architects such as Gordon Kauffmann, William Pereira, Cliff May, Herbert Burns, Walter S. White, A. Quincy Jones, Albert Frey, Rudolph Schindler, Harry Williams and Tommy Tomson.

More than being the first comprehensive overview of Palm Desert’s architectural history, historian Luke Leuschner seeks to examine the larger social construction of the “desert” in the post-war period, and the transformation from the

“wasteland” to the “wonderland.” It will feature previously-unseen material from the archives of the Historical Society of Palm Desert, presenting a chapter of Desert Modernism and California history that is scarcely known. The lecture will be at the Spiritual Center at 45630 Portola at 6 PM on Friday, October 25th.

Dr. Peter Zmolek



Dr. Peter Zmolek, BHE Renewables senior research and development director of mineral development, has over 20 years of experience and is currently orchestrating efforts to sustainably recover lithium chloride from geothermal brine located in Imperial Valley, California. Specializing in chemistry and science-based leadership, Peter and the BHE Renewables team are currently moving the project to demonstration-scale level that will provide the data needed to inform a decision on commercial-scale lithium production. Dr. Zmolek will speak at the Friday Night Lecture on November 15 at the Palm Desert Library at 73300 Fred Waring Drive, beginning promptly at 5:30 PM.

HSPD Architecture and Design Committee Report



Summer has gone, and we look forward to another great season in the desert. The HSPD Architecture and Design Committee is pleased to announce that we have two events sanctioned by Modernism Week for February 2025.

The first is a return of our successful and sold-out Walking Tour of last year. The encore, “Still Living Large in Small Spaces,” will have three guided tours on the mornings of February 20th and 21st. Once again, we will begin at Hugh Kaptur's heritage-designated Kings Point and wend our way through the area, visiting midcentury houses and condominiums, and returning to Kings Court for a reception. We were able to keep the cost at \$55.00 for the two-hour event. Along the way, we will have a surprise or two.

Also please join us for a free event, our Modernism Week Open House at the Firehouse Museum on February 19th from 4:00-6:00 PM. Come see our new garden installation and exhibit of Breeze Blocks, wonderfully curated by the HSPD president, David Toltzmann. These ubiquitous blocks, popularized by Edward Durall Stone, brought high design to the outdoors, and occasionally the indoors, during their heyday from the early 1950's to the mid-1960's. Breeze Blocks are found at embassies (New Delhi), World Fairs (1964, New York) and homes throughout the Coachella Valley and elsewhere. Light refreshments will be served. These events will be available for registration on November 1st at the Modernism Week website, [https:// modernismweek.org](https://modernismweek.org)

New update: the vintage Mojave Resort has been undergoing an updating and restoration project and will soon open its doors again. Rumor has it that we will be invited to enjoy a “sneak peek.” Details to follow. We continue to photograph and catalogue historic homes in Palm Desert and welcome any contributions, including stories that you might have. Contact the Firehouse Museum at 760-346-6588 and leave a message for me.

We hope to see you at the Modernism Week Events. Many sell out quickly, so best of luck in obtaining tickets to all the events that intrigue you.

Linda Holden Clode, Chair, A&D Committee

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