



# HISTORY MATTERS

## CHA UPCOMING EVENTS

All tickets available at [coronadohistory.org](http://coronadohistory.org)  
or by calling 619-435-7242.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2 TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE! GRAND JUBILEE GALA

Friday, March 8 at 5:30 pm

Wine & Lecture

HELP! - San Diego Lifeguards  
to the Rescue

CHA Members \$15 | Non-Members \$18

Thursday, March 21 at 5:30 pm

50th Anniversary Exhibit Opening

CHA Collects!

Members Only | RSVP Required

### CORONADO COMMUNITY READ EVENTS:

Saturday, March 16 at 11:00 am

Hands on History

Coronado's WPA Murals

Children, Ages 4-12 | Free

Wednesday, March 27 at 2:00 pm

Preservation Workshop

Caring for your Scrapbooks

RSVP Required | Free

Friday, March 29 at 5:30 pm

Wine & Lecture

1930s Coronado & Fallbrook

Members & Community Read

Participants \$15

Non-Members \$18

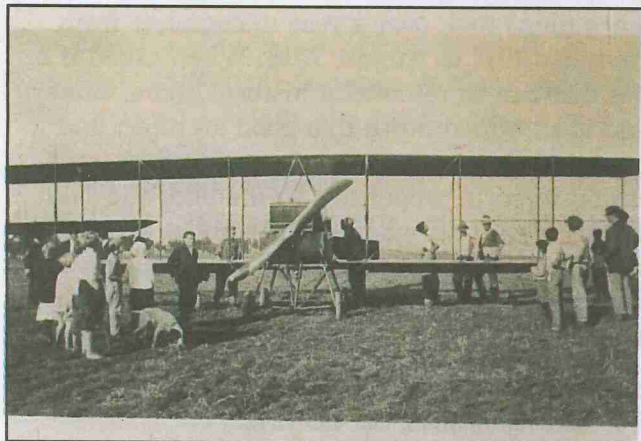
Become a Member Today!

Visit [www.coronadohistory.org](http://www.coronadohistory.org)

or Call 619-435-7242.

## HISTORY MYSTERY

A monthly photo of Coronado's past for  
residents to guess. Photo from Joe Yager.  
See Page 3 for the answer.

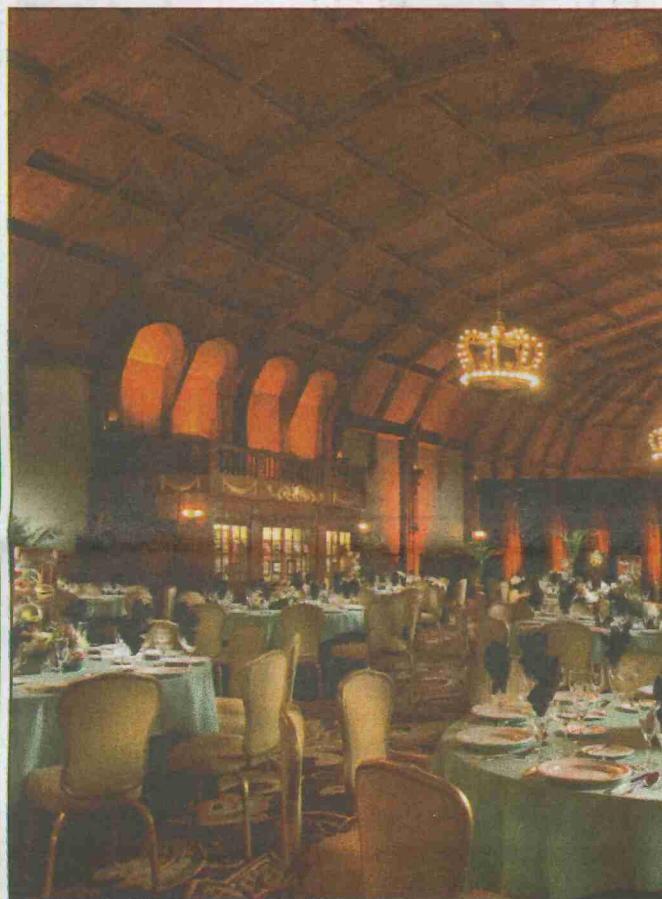


## 50th Anniversary Gala

On Saturday, March 2nd, the Coronado Historical Association will be holding its annual Gala. This year's evening will be particularly special as CHA celebrates its 50th Anniversary. The event will bring back memories for many and educate others about the history of the organization that has been a backbone of Coronado's community spirit.

The only place fit to hold such a special occasion is the Crown Room at the Hotel Del Coronado, where dinner and wine will be served while guests are entertained with stories from the past. During the evening, the unforgettable sound of opera music will once again fill the Crown room after nearly a century, courtesy of The San Diego Opera. This surprise entertainment will transport guests to a time that would have been familiar to John D. Spreckels and his many influential guests long ago.

All are invited to partake in this extraordinary occasion. Join us for an unforgettable evening to support a local organization. Come for the history, come for the elegance or come for the entertainment, either way, you will be sure to enjoy a magical night that might not take place for another 50 years.



TICKETS ON  
SALE NOW

50<sup>TH</sup>  
Grand Jubilee

CORONADO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

G A L A

03.02.19

For more information  
call 619.435.7242

## Help! San Diego Lifeguard History

Join us for an evening of wine and cheese as author Michael T. Martino discusses his book *HELP! San Diego Lifeguards to the Rescue: A History of Their Service Volume 1*.

*HELP! San Diego Lifeguards to the Rescue* is a compelling and comprehensive history of lifeguards along the San Diego Coast. It follows the evolution and acceptance of the need for public safety and the development of agencies to provide that service. In the early pre-lifeguard years, citizens provided the aquatic rescues in bay and ocean. Later, private lifeguards were implemented at bathhouses along the coast, and finally, after a great tragedy, the City's lifeguard service was created. From the ashes of tragic incidents has grown a dedicated professional service that sees its greatest gift is the ability to save another person's life.

Michael has served in every capacity as a lifeguard with California State Parks, including seasonal lifeguard, lifeguard peace officer, lifeguard supervisor, Public Safety Superintendent, and finally Aquatic Specialist, which is the Chief Lifeguard in the state park system. He taught English in San Diego high schools while working seasonally as a lifeguard. He has a Master's Degree in Rhetoric and the Teaching of Writing and was a report-writing instructor at the CSP's Peace Officer Academy for over 10 years.

Tickets are \$15 for Member and \$18 for Non-Member. Your ticket includes food and drink. The reception is at 5:30 pm and the lecture begins at 6:00 pm. Purchase tickets at [www.coronadohistory.org](http://www.coronadohistory.org), by calling 435-7242, or visiting the Museum Store

Join us the rest of the month for CHA's Community Read Programming in partnership with the Coronado Arts Commission and Coronado Public Library (see events calendar).

# HELP!

SAN DIEGO LIFEGUARDS TO THE RESCUE

A History of Their Service · Volume 1: 1868-1941

Wine & Lecture

By Michael T. Martino

March 8, 2019

Reception 5:30

Lecture 6:00



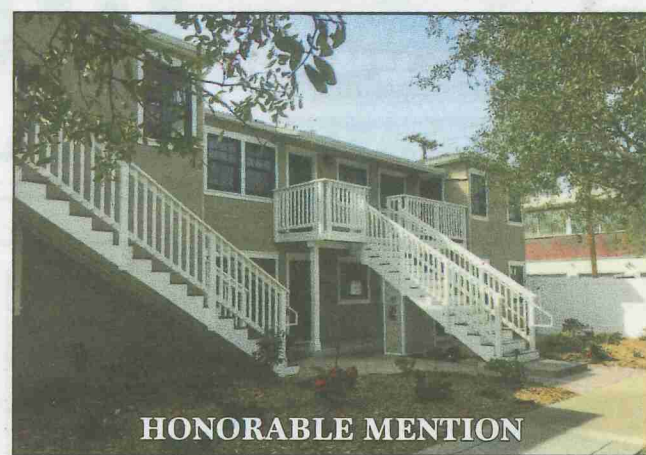
## FINAL NOMINEES ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2019 GEM AWARD

The Coronado Historical Association's GEM Award honors thoughtful efforts of homeowners to preserve and restore, rather than replace existing homes. The award celebrates our community members who turn potential teardowns into architectural GEMs. These owners truly Go the Extra Mile (GEM).

Last year's GEM Award winners, Paul and Karen Laedlein's 944 I Avenue bungalow style home features a prime example of the low, gable roof which is of particular architectural significance in this style. In the 1930s Mr. and Mrs. Martin Wicarius, who were well known in the society pages, lived in the home. By 1945, Lt. Comdr. MacGregor Kilpatrick wife lived in the home. He was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism in action with carrier forces of the Pacific fleet during WWII.

The Coronado Historical Association's GEM Committee is pleased to announce this year's finalists: 615 B Avenue, 501 Orange Avenue, and 555 B Avenue. The award is sponsored by Coronado Private Bank, and the winner will be announced at the Association's annual Celebrating History Jubilee Gala on Saturday, March 2, 2019, at the Hotel del Coronado.

These are Coronado's GEMs:



HONORABLE MENTION

### Seventh St Apartments

Thank you to the community for your many wonderful nominations! This year the GEM Committee's work was cut out for them. They are happy to announce that in addition to the finalists, they would like to recognize the restoration of the apartments located at 7th Avenue and F Street as an honorable mention for the restoration of old Coronado craftsmanship of a multi-unit building.

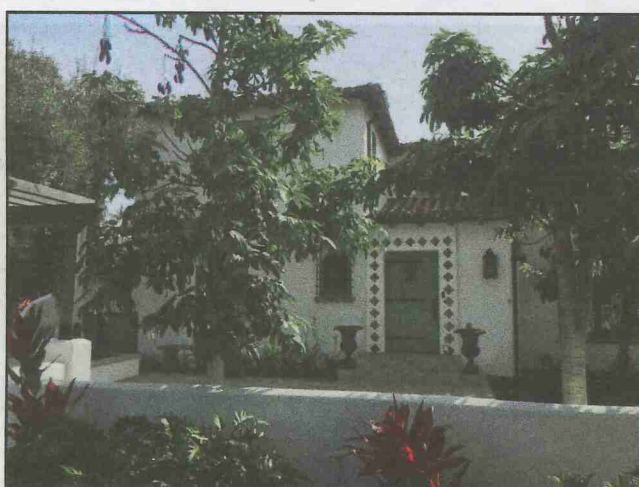


### 501 Orange Avenue

The cottage style home at 501 Orange Avenue recently got a modern update while retaining its historic structure. Community members nominated the property because the charming update preserved the character of the home and residential history of Orange Avenue. Preserving the historic home was part of the draw for current owners, Andrea and Thomas Kotoske. Andrea loves to tell the story of how they purchased the home. The house already had a number of other offers and timing was against them. On the eve on 4th of July, "my family all sat on the beach writing a letter to this man, letting them know why we wanted the house and that we didn't want to tear it down." Once the Kotoskes owned the property, the first two building contract offers were to knock the house down and start from scratch. The third time's the charm, because their last building contractor saw the potential of restoring a historic home.

The home history begins in 1921 when it was built. Contractor John Edmund Alcaraz, who is noted to have built at least thirty five properties in Coronado. Alcaraz was a carpenter and contractor whose prolific home building skills earned him prestige among Coronado residents. He served as the President of the Board of Trustees of the City of Coronado, the position now known as Mayor, from 1924 to 1926.

Ray and Ruth Baker, lived there from 1944 to 1975. Ray, worked as a newspaper circulation manager. He and his wife Ruth ran the Coronado "Greeting Service" out of their home which was a prime location to welcome newcomers to the island. There is a great history of families living in the house. As Kotoske says, "we put a lot of heart into this house."



### 555 B Avenue

The GEM nominee at 555 B Avenue is a supreme example of a quality renovation. Recently, the Spanish style residence added a second story addition. Though visible in the front elevation, the addition does not detract from the primary historic elements of the home. The property, built in 1933, was added to the City of Coronado's Historic Resource List in 2013. The home's architect Paul Hathaway studied architecture at the University of Southern California and San Diego State College. Throughout the 1930s he designed and built at least 35 properties in Coronado. His style was largely influenced by popular styles on the East coast, including Dutch Colonial and Williamsburg Colonial styles. However, he did build a few residences in the Spanish style, of which 555 B is an exemplary example. Primary trademarks of the Spanish Eclectic style include ornate tile work and orange roof tiles. Hathaway's work in Coronado came to an end at the onset of the Second War, when he entered the US Navy in 1941.



### 615 B Avenue

The 2019 GEM nominee at 615 B Avenue is an excellent example of a restoration project of a single family dwelling, leaving no visible alterations or additions to the front elevation. The property is currently owned by Deborah Boney of Boney's Bayside Market. Boney embarked on a restoration project that included adding square footage in the back and restoring the facade. Boney explained that she didn't know much about the history of the home prior to the renovation, "I thought it was in a good location and I was drawn to the beautiful paneled windows and the porch in front". The first record of the charming craftsman bungalow is in 1916, when the home became the residence of Richard and Katherine Jessop. Richard was the son of famed San Diego jeweler, Joseph Jessop.

A later owner was Mrs. Esther Megear Tobelman lived in the home from the mid-1940s through the 1970s. Mrs. Tobelman moved to the property shortly after her husband, Navy Lieutenant Commander Paul H. Tobelman, was reported missing after a 1942 plane crash in Alaska. Mrs. Tobelman worked as an assistant librarian, raising her two daughters Ann and Nancy in the home. Nancy was a notable CHS photographer and Ann became a school teacher.

Current owner, Deborah Boney, said that renovations took over a year to complete from February 2017 to August 2018. When asked if it was difficult to remodel a historic home, Boney said it all boiled down to a good architect and a good contractor who were experienced in working on historic properties. In the end, she said the work paid off when she got praise for maintaining the historical charm, "a previous owner's daughter stopped by and was happy that we left it the way it was."



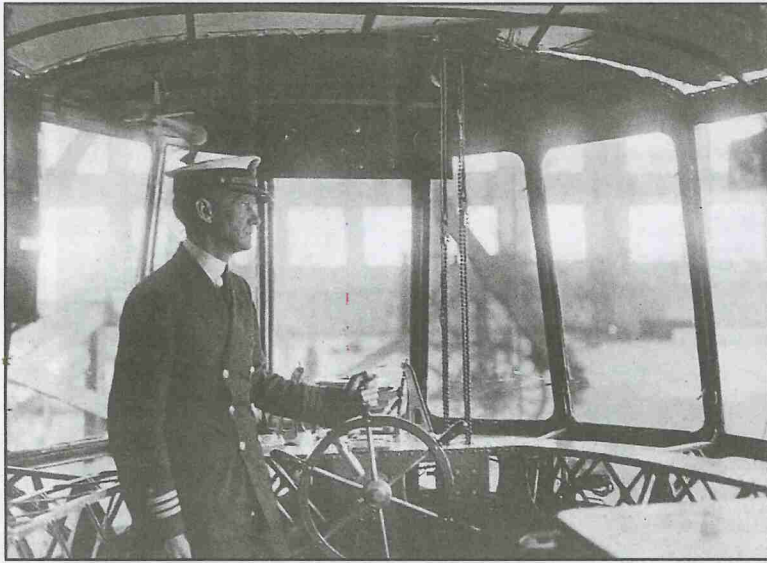
Join CHA Saturday, March 2, at the Jubilee Gala for the announcement of this year's GEM winner. For more information, call 435-7242.

## “CAPTAIN McCrARY’S QUARTERS”

*Shenandoah Revisited - Airship Trailblazer Lived on Coronado*  
by Karen Scanlon

Maybe you caught a recent article in History Matters, “Airship Shenandoah’s Perilous Past Touches North Island.” The 680-foot Zeppelin completed her first transcontinental flight at North Island in October 1924. The article caught the attention of Coronado resident, Mary Ann Thomas of Olive Street. Turns out, her father, Captain Frank Robert McCrary, was the first naval lighter-than-air (LTA) pilot, and Shenandoah’s first commanding officer. This is a history noteworthy of our attention.

How can this be, McCrary was born in 1879? “My father was 57 years of age when I was born,” Mary Ann says. Long past his days as an LTA pilot. The naval airship program ceased to exist after the 1935 crash of airship *USS Macon* near Monterey. But Mary Ann remembers a casual conversation about her father’s short career with airships. “A good friend of my parents, Admiral Jackson, wanted to go up in *Shenandoah*. This was probably at NAS Lakehurst. Well, Mother wanted to go, too, but Father said a vehement NO! In protest, she went over his head to Admiral Jackson. My father was furious! He put mother by herself in the back of the airship by the motors. Jackson was seated up front. Unknown to my father, at some point during the flight, Jackson moved to the back with my mother. The ship comes in and they have trouble getting the tail ropes down. Dad said, “We’ll let her bounce around a little while to teach her a lesson.”



Frank R. McCrary at the wheel of airship *Shenandoah*, c. 1923.

Image in the Public Domain

After an hour, the tether lines were dropped. “We can only imagine my father’s face when out came Admiral Jackson with my mother at the stern of the ship. He loved the trip.”

McCrory’s naval career apart from the early airships is equally striking. A 1901 graduate of US Naval Academy Annapolis, he served as Commanding Officer (CO) of a U.S. Naval Aviation Detachment in Ireland and France in World War I, for which he was awarded the Navy Cross “for distinguished and heroic service.”

McCrory also served as CO aboard the carriers *USS Langley* and *USS Saratoga*, and as CO of NAS North Island twice. He spent ten years at Naval War College, served as CO Naval Air Training at Pensacola, and retired from Bureau of Aeronautics in 1936. Captain McCrary moved his family to 1105 G Street on Coronado in 1935. But he was recalled into service in 1940 and took the first command of the new NAS Alameda. The family returned to Coronado in 1950. The good Captain resided on Olive Street until his death in June 1952.

“We adored each other,” Mary Ann said of her father. “He was like a grandfather to me but was my father. He’d drive me to movies but wouldn’t stay to see the film. He was moderately deaf from the air blowing through the bi-wing planes he flew.” As a five-year-old child in Alameda, Mary Ann remembers that her first boyfriend was John McCain. “Oh, my family used to visit Admiral Nimitz, too,” she says. “And Doolittle’s Raid was planned in my parents living room.”

Doolittle’s Raid was the U.S. military response four months later to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Mary Ann says, “They took Mitchell B-25s, loaded ‘em with bombs, and practiced taking off at an airstrip that simulated a carrier deck.” Then these cumbersome craft were flown from pitching carrier decks, and the raid on Tokyo hailed as one of the military’s greatest achievements.

Interestingly Mary Ann’s two brothers also had naval careers. Shannon aboard *USS Enterprise* as a torpedo bomber, and after the war went to Grumann as a test pilot for the Navy. He came to San Diego to help build Top Gun but was killed when he crashed into a mountain in 1956.”

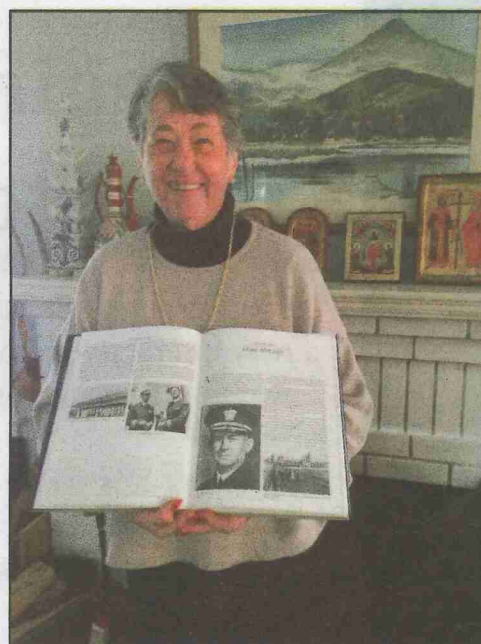
Brother Bob earned the Silver Star for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States when Japanese Kamikaze bombers struck his ship, *USS Franklin*. The three McCrary officers are laid to rest at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.

In her own career, Mary Ann raised three children and was an award-winning educator and dean (elected Schoolmaster of the Year), and recognition from President Clinton for one of many student clubs of her design.

Today Mary Ann, and husband John (a retired USN captain and attorney) reside in the McCrary home on Olive Street where hang her father’s Navy cover—the early cocked hat—and his shoulder epaulets. Pieces of a Navy era gone by. You may find Mary Ann volunteering at the front desk of Coronado Historical Association many Monday afternoons. And, look for Captain McCrary’s banner on Coronado’s Avenue of Heroes.

“On my father’s last birthday, in October 1951, my Coronado High School girlfriends and I (affectionately known as the Toastites) gave him a birthday party here at his house.” This prestigious naval officer, whose emotions were always in check, was so moved that he cried.

The phone rings, and Mary Ann in her required greeting, “Captain McCrary’s quarters.”



Coronado resident Mary Ann Thomas, daughter of the first naval lighter-than-air pilot, treasures her father’s service to the U.S. Navy.

Courtesy Karen Scanlon

## HISTORY MYSTERY

This month’s mystery may seem obvious: it’s Glenn Curtiss at North Island, working with his first aviation students. However, this photo is deceiving; while it does depict an airplane flown by Glenn Curtiss and Glenn Martin, this flight’s landing actually took place in a field between First Street and the bay. This surprising photograph is evidence of the many different locations around Coronado that were used as makeshift landing strips. Along with First Street, other landing locations included the beach and the park at Visalia and Guadalupe.

Bruce Linder elaborated on Curtiss’ life in Coronado in a Field Guide to Coronado History: “Beginning in the winter of 1911, aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss put Coronado and North Island on the map. Seeking winter warmth, ideal flying conditions, and a degree of isolation, Curtiss arranged a free-of-charge, three-year lease of barren North Island from John D. Spreckels. There he began an early flying school, sponsored aviation exhibitions for the public, and tinkered with new aviation designs and breakthroughs. High on Curtiss’ list was to attract interest from the Navy to purchase Curtiss aircraft and he flew the world’s first seaplane from the waters of Spanish Bight between North Island and Coronado and later trained the first American naval aviator in its use. Aviators from both the Army and Navy returned again and again to North Island until the skies filled with military aircraft and Coronado was the site for a bevy of aviation firsts and world records. North Island rightfully carries the title as “The Birthplace of Naval Aviation” due largely to Curtiss’ activity. Without Curtiss, American military developments in aviation would have taken a much different path and, arguably, North Island would not be as it is today. Curtiss’ wife and family accompanied him on that first winter in Coronado in 1911 in a home described “as close to the Hotel del Coronado.” The advantages of wintering in Coronado versus staying at the family homestead in icy upstate New York could not have been more obvious to all. Curtiss commuted to work by use of a punt to row across Spanish Bight and quickly began to look for more permanent lodging for his family. By the next winter, Curtiss had selected an empty plot at 301 Alameda Boulevard between Third and Fourth Streets and built a Craftsman-style bungalow for \$7000 for his family and as his office. Not only did the home overlook Spanish Bight, where Curtiss could easily follow aircraft operations, but the house stood across the street from Coronado’s golf course of the day where Curtiss, an avid golfer, kept his game in shape.”



### SAVE THE DATE

Please join the  
Coronado Historical Association  
in celebration of 50 years

# 03.02.19

## 50

Grand Jubilee

CORONADO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Please RSVP to [info@coronadohistorical.org](mailto:info@coronadohistorical.org)  
or call 619.435.7242