



HISTORY MATTERS

CHA UPCOMING EVENTS

Coffee & Conversations:

Topic to Be Announced

CHS Intern Produced

Thursday, March 19 • 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Free • RSVP

Hops + History:

History of the Coronado Fire Department

A 2020 Community Read Event

Tuesday, March 24 • 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

\$10 for CHA Members

\$15 for Non-Members

Curatorial Workshop:

Recovering Books After a Fire & Flood

A 2020 Community Read Event

Wednesday, March 25 • 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Wine & Lecture:

The Knock at the Door

Friday, March 27 • 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

\$15 for CHA Members

\$18 for Non-Members

R.S.V.P. or Purchase Tickets for all events at www.coronadohistory.org, 619-435-7242, or by visiting the Museum Store at 1100 Orange Avenue.



HISTORY MYSTERY

A monthly photo from CHA's Collection of Coronado's past for residents to guess.

What does this photo depict?

See page 18 for the answer.

SYNCOPE & SWING WITH CHA AT THE ANNUAL CELEBRATING HISTORY GALA

Last chance for early bird pricing! Join CHA on Saturday, April 4, 2020, for the Association's fund raising event, the Celebrating History Gala. This year, CHA will celebrate Coronado's Roaring 1920s as we kick off the 2020s. Early bird pricing ends on March 6, so get your tickets now!

One of the most anticipated parts of the Gala every year is the entertainment. To get in the mood, CHA staff have combed through the archives to see Coronado's take on the Jazz Age. Luckily there is a photo of Vic Meyers and his band at one of the many costume balls held at the Hotel del Coronado in the 1920s.

Although Vic Meyer may be remembered more for his political career in the state of Washington, before that he performed as a jazz musician with his own band. Meyer was only 21 when he put together a 10-piece band. Starting in the early 1920s, his band played at Seattle's Hotel Butler for a few years and started touring after they scored a record deal. One stop along the way was the Hotel del Coronado, whose costume balls were a popular pastime for celebrities and locals alike.

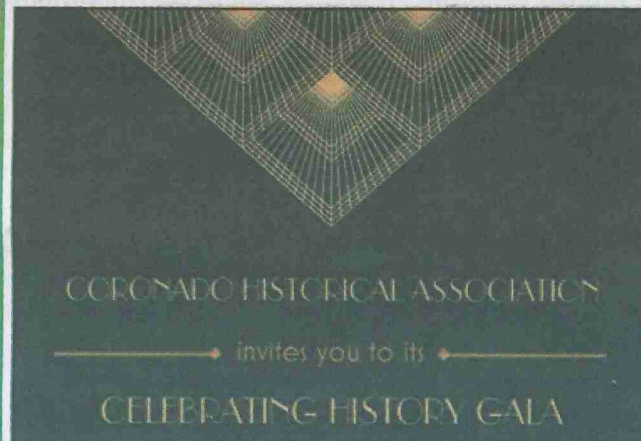
The *Coronado Journal* reported in December 1923, "All week there was dancing in the Casino to music furnished by Vic Meyer and his orches-



From CHA's archives, Vic Meyer's Orchestra poses at the Hotel del Coronado's Pirates Ball. c. 1923.

tra. These nightly dances will be a regular evening feature during the winter season, except on Sunday nights." The band was known for eliciting the best dance moves for their rhythmic numbers but also, in part, because they were known to disregard Prohibition restrictions.

In addition to jazz, one of the highlights of this year's Gala will be the awarding of the Going the Extra Mile (GEM) award. The Coronado Historical Association is dedicated to preserving our community's special heritage and celebrating our past, present, and future. In that spirit, every year since 2013 we have presented the GEM award to the owner of a local home or business to recognize their efforts to preserve a historic building. These dedicated community members choose to restore rather than replace these structures, ensuring that Coronado's architectural gems remain in place for generations to come. Thank you, Coronado community, for your GEM nominations this year! The nominees will be announced in next month's *History Matters* and the winner will be announced at the Celebrating History Gala on April 4.



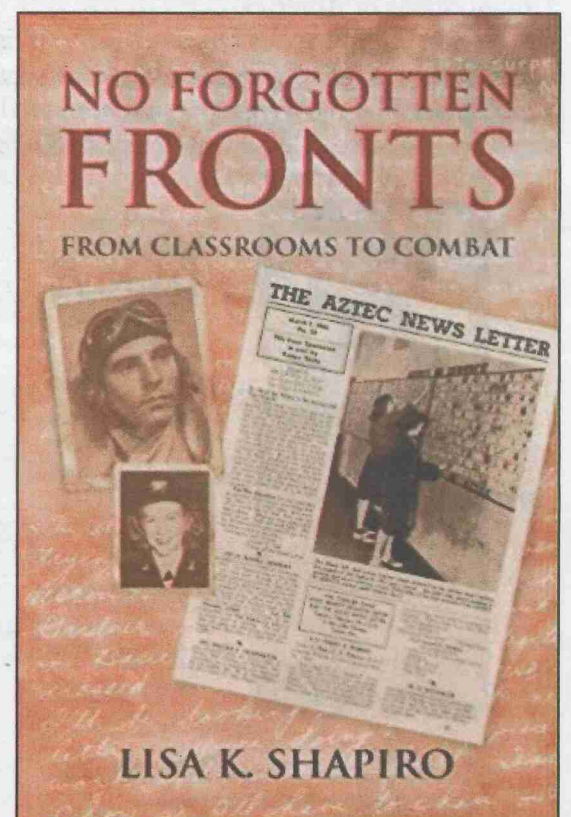
"DEAR DOC": ACTORS BRING LETTERS TO LIFE

On Friday, February 21, the Coronado Historical Association was honored to host Write Out Loud San Diego for one of the most memorable CHA programs to date. Hops + History: Letters from the War was a follow-up to the January Wine & Lecture: No Forgotten Fronts, when Author Lisa Shapiro shared more on her book "No Forgotten Fronts: From Classroom to Combat". Her book is based on the letters gathered by SDSU professor Dr. Post, who asked his students to write to him during WWII. He took excerpts of these letters and created a newsletter that circulated throughout campus called the "Aztec Newsletter".

Hops + History is a different program from CHA's well-known Wine & Lecture series. The program offers a different experience for guests, whether it be through a panel of speakers or in this case an incredible local group of performers from Write Out Loud San Diego, who read some of the letters Dr. Post gathered in a truly moving performance.

One attendee remarked "Fantastic program!"

Hops + History, continued on page 19.





HONOR FLIGHT IS LOOKING FOR A FEW VETERANS

Earlier this month, Honor Flight San Diego contacted the Coronado Historical Association because they are looking for veterans to join them on trips to Washington D.C. Honor Flight trips this year will be the first weekend in May and the first weekend in October.

Honor Flight San Diego (HFSD) is a non-profit branch of the nationwide Honor Flight Network which consists of over 130 independent "hubs" across America. HFSD escorts veterans to Washington, D.C. to see their memorials using monies donated by individuals, foundations, associations, business owners, and corporations who wish to recognize our veterans' contributions and thank them for their service and sacrifice to the United States and its citizens.

Top priority for trips is given to the most senior veterans, currently World War II and Korea War survivors, and to veterans who are terminally ill.

Of all of the wars in recent memory, World War II truly threatened our very existence as a nation and as a culturally diverse and free society. With hundreds of World War II veterans passing away each day, the opportunity to express our sincere thanks to these brave men and women is running out.

Korea War veterans were called to serve just five short years after WWII veterans in what is called "The Forgotten War." The time for honoring these men and women is growing short as well.

Honor Flight says thank you to all of our veterans and extends a special thanks to our most senior veterans for their dedication and commitment to protecting the freedoms enjoyed by so many here in the greatest nation on earth, the United States of America.

Honor Flight invites our veterans to join us on your "Tour of Honor." To learn more or sign up, visit Honor Flight's website at: www.honorflight-sandiego.org or call Lisa Gary at 619-889-7853.



We need your help to locate San Diego County World War II and Korean War Veterans for our May and October 2020 trips.

We want to honor them by taking them on a 3-day trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the memorials built for their service and sacrifice.

Since 2010, Honor Flight San Diego has taken over 1,400 veterans on this trip. Due to generous donors, the trip is no cost to the veteran.

"It was the best weekend of my life!" - WWII Veteran after his Honor Flight

For more information, please contact Lisa Gary at: (619) 889-7853 or email: llabretgary@gmail.com

Website: www.honorflightsandiego.org

A RARE FIND IN THE ARCHIVES: AVIATION REVIEW 1921

by Kimball Worcester,
CHA Research Library Volunteer

While filling out condition reports on some books in the CHA collection, I came across a dark blue, hardbound book, horizontal in its presentation, not large, with a beautiful gilt-embossed graphic on the front cover and the title *Aviation Review 1921*. Its pages proved an enticement, and I leafed through them all, curiosity growing.

Aviation Review 1921 combines contemporary details of the Naval Air Station on Coronado's North Island, aviation history, and humorous futurism about the marvel of flying. The Great War had ended barely two years before the book was put together, and the world could now be in love with aviation again, without the wartime tragedies.

The stage was reset for competitions and records and possibilities before undreamed-of. Antony Fokker moved much of his airplane production from the Netherlands to the United States to promote civil transport aviation on a continent untouched by war and its depredations. American airplane designers moved forward as well, with all the spirit and resources the postwar U.S. was offering. The now and the future of aviation were here in the New World.

Glenn Curtiss, of course, had contributed to the establishment of naval aviation on North Island well before the war. The Navy returned to the island in 1917 (having left in 1912), and by 1921 was a strong presence on the island. Lieutenant George R. Pond, USNRF, was stationed here and produced this book, apparently his only literary contribution to his naval service. The book reads as a kind of yearbook, with rosters of men and officers, commentary on life here in Coronado and the air station, some puerile humor (sadly, often racist and sexist), drawings and cartoons, and some stunning aerial photos taken by the noteworthy J.M.F. Haase (incorrectly credited as M.H.F. Haase, oddly). Pond calls his book a "Rough Log" of life on North Island. He discourses also on the legend of Icarus, aviation development history, and the recent—the first—air war.

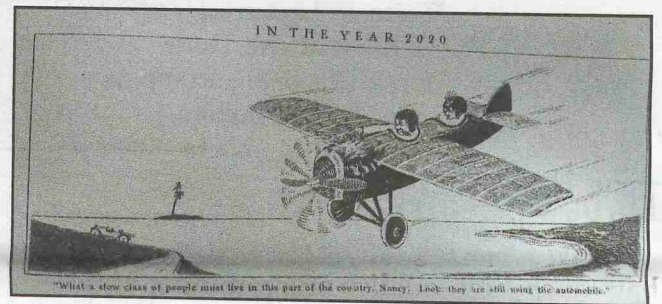
One particularly stunning aerial view taken at the time is of most of South Island and all of North Island, with the Spanish Bight revealed in its full glory. Indeed, the tide must have been quite high that day, since the beach connecting the two islands looks barely visible between the bight and the ocean surf.

The anticipation of the March 1922 commis-

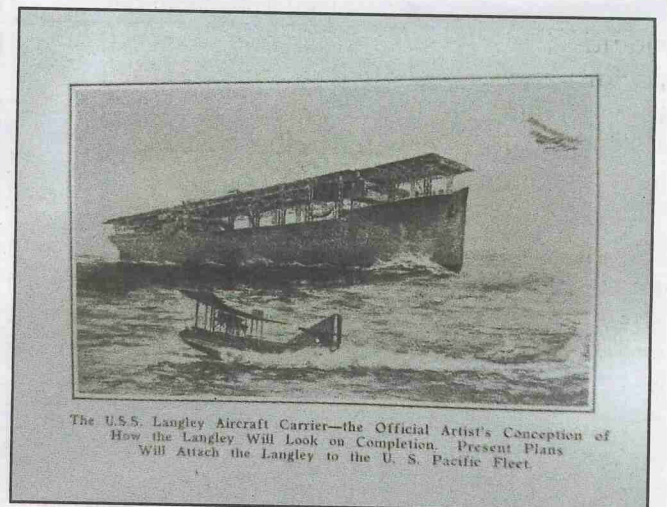
sioning of *USS Langley* must have been high at North Island, although the Navy's first aircraft carrier was not to arrive from the East Coast until November 1924. In the meantime, this artist's rendition published in *Aviation Review* is a lyrical place marker for the 1924 enhancement of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Several cartoons predicting the use of airplanes a hundred years from the book's publication are of particular interest given that those hundred years have just barely now passed, and these cartoons have proved not prescient but fanciful. They do, however, exhibit the growing delight in this free-as-a-bird type of travel that was seen with the potential to benefit everyone.

Lieutenant Pond left North Island soon after the book was published, posted to Squantum, Massachusetts, in 1923 and commissioned as commanding officer of a seaplane unit there at the Naval Reserve Air Station. Subsequent news of him has proved difficult to come across, with the exception of a Capt. George R. Pond who participated in a transatlantic air crossing in May 1934, which ended up in Ireland, not the intended Rome. Nevertheless, the flight counted as the eighth full flight across the Atlantic. Could this have been our George R. Pond from 1921 Coronado?



Pages from the *Aircraft Review 1921* found in CHA's collection.



The U.S. Langley Aircraft Carrier—the Official Artist's Conception of How the Langley Will Look on Completion. Present Plans Will Attach the Langley to the U. S. Pacific Fleet.

HISTORY MYSTERY ANSWER

The building in the photo was the private residence of Mr. & Mrs. John W. Mitchell at 1063 Ocean Boulevard, on the closest lot to the Hotel del Coronado. Mr. Mitchell was a well-known art collector with homes in Los Angeles and Coronado. After his death, his widow opened the Ocean Boulevard home as a gallery in 1926. Though not public, the gallery was very popular in town with many social clubs requesting meetings to be held there and exclusive viewings of the gallery. The gallery closed in 1931 when Mrs. Mitchell passed away.

The Mitchell residence and gallery received a lot of interest in 2017, when CHA received a research request to find more information about two very interesting paintings by sixteenth century artist Otto van Veen. The request came from the Birmingham Museum of Art. Curators at the museum heard a rumor that their paintings were once here on Coronado. CHA staff worked together with the curators to solve the mystery of the paint-

ings' background. After diving into the collection at CHA, we were able to find the original auction books of the John W. Mitchell Gallery of Fine Arts. Sure enough, the paintings were on display in the gallery in the 1920s. Otto Van Veen was a humanist artist active during the turn of the 17th century in Antwerp and Brussels. His portraits of Gilles du Fanny and Marguerite de Steeland de Gand were part of Mr. John W. Mitchell's private collection.

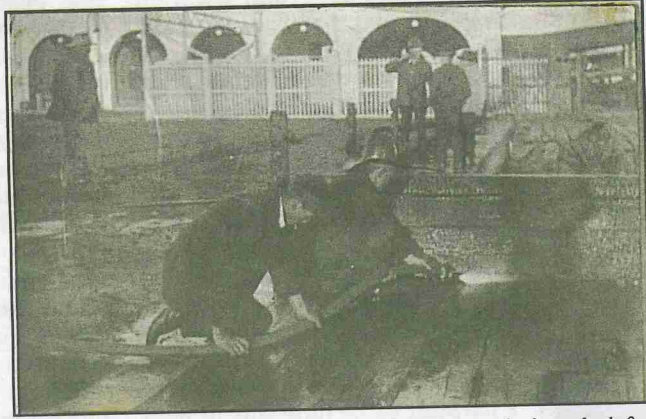
Due to pressures of the Depression, the City of Coronado, which controlled the property after the passing of Mrs. Mitchell, sold all of the artwork and razed the property. The van Veen portraits were subsequently sold at auction to Mr. & Mrs. Carl Johnson of Coronado. Five years later, they appeared together at the California Pacific International Exposition in 1936, and almost 100 years later, the portraits are now cared for by the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama, where their connection to our town is documented.

CHA'S COMMUNITY READ PROGRAMMING

The Coronado Historical Association is proud to partner again for this year's Community Read. CHA will host two programs that explore the topics in this year's book, *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean, which tells the story of the 1986 fire at the Los Angeles Central Public Library. CHA's programming will cover how fires and resulting water damage affect libraries, museums, and other cultural institutions.

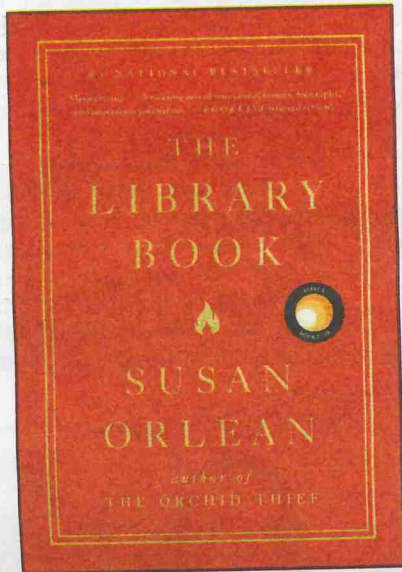
The first program, scheduled for March 24, will be a Hops + History program with the Coronado Fire Department. CHA will host two firefighters who will speak about the history of the City of Coronado Fire Department. *The Library Book* describes a catastrophic fire that reached 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, burned for over seven hours, and defied investigators' efforts to find its cause. Coronado's historic fires may seem mild by comparison but were dramatic, nonetheless. To illustrate that history, they will be sharing photos from the Department and the Historical Association's vast photograph collection. Battalion Chief Jayson V. Summers and Firefighter Colin McKay will also discuss balloon frame construction, which was the most common style of residential construction in the early years of Coronado, and share fire prevention tips.

CHA will also be hosting a Curatorial Workshop about how



From the archives, two firefighters put out the Coronado ferry dock fire on the Coronado side. November 1921.

to recover books, scrapbooks, and other family heirlooms after a fire or flood. From a small kitchen fire to a natural disaster, emergency fire situations can be detrimental to your family heirlooms and treasures. The workshop, led by museum professional Vickie Stone, will teach simple and effective preservation techniques to treat your own books and scrapbooks at home after a fire or flood. She will also share some very special books from the Association's collection, highlight how museums prepare for emergencies, and how they recover books, artifacts, and archives after a disaster. Participants are encouraged to bring book or scrapbook materials from home.



Hops + History, continued from page 17.

How inspiring, and how lucky are we to have such high-quality programming at CHA! History matters!"

Many others agreed that the program would remain a memorable one. The actors' performances were moving and emotional; they brought the letters back to life. Tom Rice, one of the original letter writers, was also present during the program.

Jonnie Wilson, founder of Write Out Loud and an SDSU journalism graduate, who has been a writer and editor for over 40 years, shared with us what inspired her to write a script from *No Forgotten Fronts: From Classroom to Combat* and what it meant to bring the performance to the Coronado Historical Association.

• How did you first connect with Write Out Loud? I first met Walter and Veronica seven or

eight years ago when I asked them to participate in an event I was planning. The audience really loved being read to, and so did I! I subsequently became a season ticket holder at Write Out Loud's theater in Old Town.

• What inspired you to take Lisa's book to Write Out Loud?

In early 2018, I attended a program at San Diego State, at which Lisa read aloud some of the students' letters from her soon-to-be-published book. Hearing Lisa give voice to these courageous—and articulate!—young San Diegans far from home had a powerful effect on me, as I learned of the students' joys and triumphs, frustrations and fears, and profound sadness upon hearing about the death of a classmate. I immediately thought of a readers theatre as the perfect vehicle to dramatize the letters, as well as educate an audience. I subsequently introduced Lisa to Walter and Veronica, and we were all on board with the idea. So, when Write Out Loud began preparing a program about the 1940s, I strung ten or so of the letters into a short script for them to include in the performance. They did, the crowd cheered, and we decided to do it again. I then wrote a longer script for a stand-alone performance, which was presented last year at the Ocean Beach Historical Society. The Coronado event marks the second time the program has been presented in its longer form.

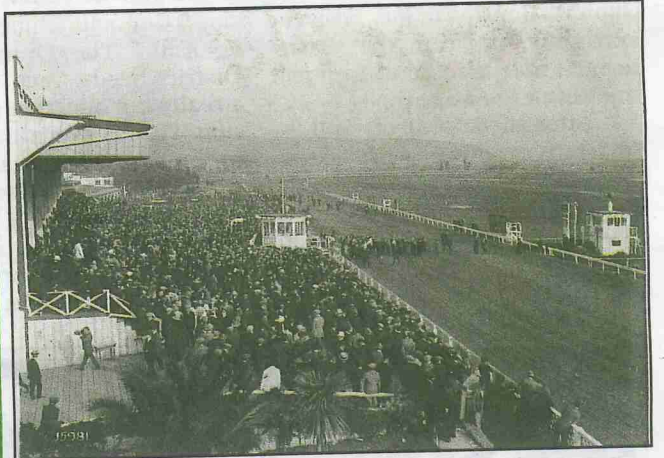
• What inspired you to bring Lisa and Write Out Loud to the Coronado Historical Association?

One of the letters included in the script was written by Tom Rice, a WWII vet and lifelong resident of Coronado. Tom was able to attend the first Write Out Loud performance, and we wanted to bring the project to his hometown as a way to honor him.



On February 21, actors recite letters written by local service members that were sent to Dr. Post during WWII.

NEWS FROM THE PAST



Horses and jockeys competing in a horse race in Tijuana, Mexico. c. 1921.

Coronado Historical Association Collection

SOCIETY NEWS: CLOSING OF THE TIJUANA RACE TRACK

Coronado Saturday Night, April 15, 1922

This week closed the racing at Tijuana.

There is no more beautiful track in the world with the possible exception of the one at Buenos Aires. We defy anyone to touch the climate, the back drop of mountains or the hilarious zeal of our winter meets.

We may not have Sam Riddle's "Man o' War" (though Walter Rupee threatens to buy hips), but we had our "Be Frank," "Charlestonia" and "Mulciber" and a few that everyone else picked for winners, that is before the race. If they were selling platers afterwards, that was not our fault, and was a horse of another color. Served us right for not playing regulars like Fuller and Irwin entries.

At the rate Coronado is going she should be able to produce her own racing stable for the next meet. Believe us there would be plenty of dark horses in it. We suggest that a citizens committee get together and appoint the judges and that our personal friends ride as jockeys and further, that none but our own horses be permitted to run. Then maybe once in a while we would be able to have that wonderful sensation of picking a winner. We would like to be able to tell our children and our children's children that someone from Coronado was able to come home without walking, having bet a two dollar bill on a sure thing.

All last week one lived in an atmosphere of rumors around Tijuana. It was the grand finale and everybody who was anybody was there and anybody listened to everybody, the result being, "Say, old pal, lend me a fiver to get home on."

Mrs. Claus Spreckels was quite the most attractive looking person at the course. In her Henna coat trimmed with grey caracule and smart patent leather hat to match. The Walter Dupees motored down from Riverside as did Mrs. Alvin Untermeyer and Elliot Dexter, one of our best known and best loved moving picture stars.

A few others of note who were present were Mrs. James Lockett, Mrs. Francis Mead, Mrs. Frank Hall Moon, Leslie Moon, the George Fullers, the Charles Holzwassers, Mrs. Robert Smart, Mrs. Frank Pixley, Mrs. Jan Van Houten, Mrs. U. S. Grant.

The Hotel del Coronado shared in the festivities as the track and the racing changed to dining and dancing Saturday night. Sessue Hayakawa, the Japanese moving picture star, and his charming wife, were the attraction of the evening, and Mrs. Sheplar Ward Fitzgerald and Mrs. Alexander, both in white, wore two of the most charming smiles and gowns of the ball.