

Communication "A" June 3, 2008 Calistoga City Council Meeting  
Item # 1: Sharpsteen Museum Association Annual Report.



**SHARPSTEEN**  
MUSEUM

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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CALISTOGA CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting Date: June 3, 2008

The board of the Sharpsteen Museum Association (SMA) continues to direct volunteers in activities that benefit the daily operation of the museum and the community. This report provides general information about the operation of the museum and a summary of museum activities.

Volunteers greeted 10,297 visitors and provided group tours for 922 guests. The museum's 48 docents worked 1,905 hours.

The diorama depicting Calistoga in the 1860's was recently restored. We thank the efforts of Dan Takasugi, Public Works Director, and his staff who secured the grant to restore this 30 year old diorama.

The museum participated in the annual conference of the California Preservation Foundation in April at Napa. In addition to promoting the museum and Calistoga, the volunteers displayed an exhibit of 19<sup>th</sup> Century artifacts that was a popular attraction.

A short subject film entitled "Tools of the Past" can now be viewed at the museum. Several volunteers participated in the making of this film at the Sebastopol ranch of a Hollywood movie set designer. The ranch includes a complete 19<sup>th</sup> Century town where the volunteers, dressed in authentic costumes, demonstrated the use of tools in the daily activities of that period.

The museum continues to network with other agencies for educational programs including the library for the children's summer reading program. The special exhibit currently on display at the museum, features the Birds of Napa County through the cooperation of the Lindsay Wildlife Museum and Natural History Museum at the Carolyn Parr Nature Center.

CITY OF CALISTOGA  
City Clerk

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## A REPORT ON SMA VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

The Board of the Sharpsteen Museum Association has identified a shortage in volunteers who participate in events sponsored by the museum. The most significant deficit is the decline in the number of docents who staff the museum on a daily basis. The following suggests potential reasons why and suggests ways to increase our volunteer base.

1. The museum was founded at a time when the City population was much smaller. The percentage of citizens with Calistoga or Upper Napa Valley roots was much higher. The majority of Calistoga citizens today have roots in other places (i.e., other California communities, states, and countries). Preserving local history may not be a high priority of the present population of Calistoga.
2. According to the 1980 U.S. census, senior citizens (persons 55 and older) represented 39 percent of Calistoga's fixed population. Seniors typically supply a high number of volunteers. Today the senior population in Calistoga is approximately 25 percent. Young people typically volunteer their time to youth related activities. Calistoga has a high percentage of working moms and female heads of households who have little time to volunteer.
3. The museum is still a valuable community resource and is especially effective in introducing to the school children "history in their own backyards".
4. The docent deficit could be off-set with a part-time paid staff. There is concern that paid staff would result in a future decision to charge an admission fee. Charging admission would not be beneficial to those families who are most in need of social and educational programs.
5. The board should consider reaching out to school leaders and business owners. Perhaps hosting small invitational only events would spark interest to those who may not have considered the museum as a volunteer opportunity. Introducing the museum's programs and community benefits at a small and personal venue might be beneficial. Perhaps a brunch or a cocktail party with a guest speaker or a docent tour of the museum might spark the interest of potential volunteers.
6. Introducing docent only events, educational opportunities, or trips could also be an incentive for potential docents.
7. Renaming the museum staff from docent to a "hospitality friendly title" may be more inviting to future volunteers.

Submitted by:

Jo Noble  
May 14, 2008

The newly installed members of the Sharpsteen Museum Association Board are as follows:

Tom Andrews, President  
Patsy Hahn, First Vice-President  
Cathy McCloskey, Second Vice-President  
Phyllis Dearing, Treasurer  
Pat Haynes, Secretary  
Emma Mazzola, Docent Chair  
Elke Strunka, Collections Chair  
Shirley Blomquist, Ways and Means  
Jo Noble Education Chair.

The board is seeking new members and volunteers. It is natural for any organization's volunteer base to fluctuate but this past year we have experienced a significant reduction in the number of museum volunteers. The attached report to the SMA board suggests potential reasons for the decline of volunteers and ways to reach out to the community. The board welcomes suggestions from the City Council and the citizenry that would aid in an increase of volunteers who are vital to the daily operation of the museum.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Noble,  
Education Chair  
Sharpsteen Museum

Attachment