

TREASURE ISLAND TIDES

NEWS FROM THE TREASURE ISLAND MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2012 ISSUE NUMBER FOUR

ISLAND TOURS

"My father often tells how he played alto saxophone at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. I played that very sax in elementary school. We're going to gather some friends and family and see if we can bring him on a tour of Treasure Island."

That email from **Wayne Traina** was the most personal of the many requests we received in 2012 for a group tour of the island. In October, Julius Traina, age 91, and a dozen family members were hosted by TIMA Vice President Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig, who also visited the GGIE as a girl. Wayne thanked us and said, "We look forward to returning when the museum officially reopens with all of its artifacts."

For a class on world's fairs from California College of the Arts, we arranged a special viewing of some sculptures from the GGIE currently in storage. We took members of the Davis Retirement Community to the island studio of Marcos

Cochran, the sculptor who created Bliss Dance on the island's Great Lawn.

Since we receive more requests for more tours than we can accommodate, TIMA Vice President Anne Schnoebelen has written an illustrated self-guided tour booklet.

On the last weekend of each month, we occasionally lead walking tours of the historic district, leaving from our booth at the Treasure Island Flea Market. These tours depend upon staffing, so check our calendar at treasureislandmuseum.org to see which days we will be at TI Flea.

There are many treasures, past and present, on Treasure Island. To show them to everyone who requests a tour, we need more volunteers.



In front of Building One, members of the S.F. Obscura Society learn about the island's history from TIMA VP Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig.

ART DECO SOCIETY AGAIN HONORS TI

Two artists with ties to Treasure Island, sculptors Jacques Schnier and Brents Carlton, were honored by the Art Deco Society of California in May.

Schnier's posthumous *Preservation Award* was accepted by his daughter, TIMA Board member Rebecca Lilienthal Schnier, who was accompanied at the ceremony and the festive Art Deco evening by other TIMA Board members and volunteers.

Schnier and Carlton created works for the 1939–1940 Golden Gate International Exposition on the island. Since 1994, Building One's center entrance doors have been guarded by the surviving Schnier sculpture pair *Spirit of India* from the 20 Pacific Unity Sculptures at the Court of Pacifica, some of which were restored by the Treasure Island Museum Association in the 1980s and 1990s.

Carlton's contributions to the group, *Polynesian Man* and *Polynesian Woman*, are in storage on the island.

Schnier created at least five other major sculptures for the GGIE, and design elements such as the airplane motif bas relief lozenges atop the narrow western walls of Building One.

The Art Deco Society's relationship with Treasure Island spans decades. The Society

produced the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the GGIE in 1989–90, and supported TIMA's efforts to preserve Treasure Island's surviving GGIE art works.

Prior *Preservation Awards* have been conferred on Donald Mackey, sculptor of the GGIE's Elephant Towers, and GGIE theme girl and TIMA Honorary Board member Zoe Dell Lantis Nutter. In 2010, the society honored Mirian Saez, Treasure Island's Director of Island Operations, for her efforts to preserve island history.



Jacques Schnier working on one of the pair, *Spirit of India*, one of five major sculptural works he created for the GGIE. (Inset) *Spirit of India* today in front of Building One.

VINTAGE SWING DANCE PARTY

TIMA NOT ONLY PRESERVES THE PAST — WE BRING IT BACK TO LIFE!

For one dazzling night last July, we returned Treasure Island to its heyday with a USO-themed swing dance party at The Winery SF, adjacent to historic Building One.

Nearly 200 avid dancers of all ages, many in military and '40s costumes, hoofed it to the vintage music of The Cosmo Alleycats. Swing U's international dance instructor Burnie Gipson led classes for novices and experts. TIMA hosted the party in collaboration with Swing U and The Winery SF.

Contest winners sporting the best vintage military uniforms and Pirate Girl outfit joined raffle winners in taking home prizes like meals at Waterbar and Epic Roasthouse, a gift bag from Dollhouse Bettie clothing, and an autographed collector's print of the original Treasure Island Pirate Girl (and TIMA honorary Board member) Zoe Dell Lantis Nutter. Marissa of Chicaboom brought racks of vintage clothing for guests to admire as well as purchase. Other sponsors included the USS Hornet Museum, Mystery Mister and Relic Vintage.

More photos from this event are online at www.flickr.com/photos/treasureislandmuseum/

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUIS DE LA TORRE





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Treasure Island Tides

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EXHIBIT: BUILDING BRIDGES

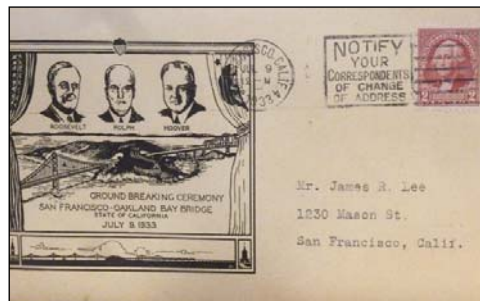
If you collect Treasure Island memorabilia, you might own an invitation or first day postal cover from the groundbreaking or opening of the Bay Bridge. The illustration on it may well have been drawn by James R. Lee, the engineer who is the focus of a new TIMA exhibit that opened at San Francisco's Main Library in November and runs through February 7, 2013.

Building Bridges: The James R. Lee Collection presents the design and construction of the Bay Bridge from the perspective of a second generation Chinese American who helped create the bridge in the 1930s. His original illustrations are on display along with vintage photographs, bridge blueprints and hand-drawn designs. Photographs chronicle Lee's family history and provide insight into social and cultural aspects of the Chinese American community at that time.

In conjunction with the exhibit, TIMA and the Library presented a screening of the Emmy award-winning documentary *Chinatown: The Hidden Cities of San Francisco* with a discussion and question session with the filmmaker, Felicia Lowe.



(Clockwise from top) Library patrons viewing exhibit artifacts and panels; first day cover illustrated by James R. Lee.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TIMA would like to thank our amazing docents and volunteers for their dedicated support for our programs and exhibits since our last newsletter: Jeanette Arevalo, Roy Barragan, Lori Barber, Ann and John Carroll, Julio Cruz, Ron Edelman, Manuel Ezquerro, Anne Ferguson, Mark Lufkin, Paul Lufkin, Michael Mingoia, Peter Montoya, Mitchell Mun, Paradise Osorio, Bradley Tanzman, Desmond Thorsson, Luis De La Torre, and Larry Vanzandt. We especially want to thank Tramecia Garner and the many veteran volunteers of Swords to Plowshares for their continuous help with TIMA's projects over the past years.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This year we continued to fulfill our mission as a trusted source of Treasure Island history through our active participation in the monthly **Treasure Island Flea** and annual **San Francisco Dragon Boat Festival**. Please check our website for the date and time of upcoming markets and events.

WHAT'S NEXT: ISLAND REDEVELOPMENT

The future of the Museum awaits progress on the redevelopment of the island. At this writing, the first transfer of land is projected for early 2013, with work to begin shortly thereafter, pending resolution of some final legal issues.

Meanwhile, we continue to operate in multiple spheres. We function as a museum and historical society, accepting acquisitions, caring for our collection, mounting exhibits, producing events, and offering tours. But the big "what's next" in our future will necessarily depend upon the

timetable and details for redevelopment.

DOCENT TRAINING

In 2013, we hope to present a series of lectures on Treasure Island's history, primarily to train volunteers to help conduct tours and staff our booth at events. The programs will be open to anyone interested in the island's history, past, present and future. For more details as plans progress, please email docents@treasureislandmuseum.org.

ACQUISITIONS IN 2012

The new TIMA collection continues to grow steadily as we receive artifact donations that document the history of Treasure Island. This year we accessioned a variety of objects including GGIE memorabilia, and an archive of documents and publications related to the former Treasure Island Museum. We thank the following donors for their contributions to the museum collection:

Ron Anderson, Arthur Banda, Kurt S. De Meire, the Estate of William J. Dunne, Richard Hansen, Nick Irwin, LaVonne Jacobsen, Paul Landucci, Claire Warren, Donald and Patricia Weller, Janice Whitlow, and TIMA Board members.

We greatly appreciate offers of materials relating to Treasure Island. Due to limited space and staff, please contact us first with a description of your object(s). Send email to registrar@treasureislandmuseum.org or call (415) 413-8462.