

California State Library Foundation

# Bulletin

Number 95

2009





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# When Baseball Was Still Baseball: The Pacific Coast League and the Sacramento Solons

by Michael Dolgushkin

Mention the name Pacific Coast League (PCL) to old-time West Coast baseball fans and they will, depending on their temperament, grow either misty-eyed or exuberant as they relate their memories of the days before Major League Baseball came west. Prior to 1958 the Pacific Coast League meant West Coast (and especially California) baseball and inspired loyalty and passion among fans that has rarely been seen in these current days of corporate ball. Many future major-leaguers got their start in the PCL, notably Chicago “Black Sox” stars Chick Gandil and Lefty Williams along with Gus Suhr, Eddie Fitz Gerald, Willie Kamm, and especially Joe DiMaggio. Other notable players finished their careers in the league, among them Lefty O’Doul, Pepper Martin, and Dazzy Vance. A mention of the Pacific Coast League conjures up images of San Francisco Seals-Oakland Oaks double-headers at two different ballparks in the same day; of the “booze cage” at San Francisco’s Recreation Park; and of the days when street urchins waited outside the parks, gloves in hand, hoping to catch a home run.

*Michael Dolgushkin is the State Library’s manuscript librarian and a frequent contributor to the Bulletin. In addition, he is a scholar of San Francisco history and an enthusiastic collector.*

Opposite page: The official score books issued by baseball teams have become highly desirable for those who collect the game's memorabilia. Often visually striking, their covers typically bore the same design throughout an entire season but might vary in color. Their contents changed from game to game, profiling specific players, giving local businesses a chance to advertise, and allowing local fans a chance to keep their own score. Here we see a 1944 Solons scorebook issued during the height of World War II and containing an appropriately patriotic motif, while the postwar Seals book exudes dramatic baseball imagery.



Sacramento, being a sort of hybrid small town/big city, incubated its own flavor of baseball fanaticism. The Sacramento Senators, in 1918, became the third Pacific Coast League franchise to operate in that city, and the team changed its name to the Solons in 1936. Players Tony Freitas and Joe Marty, and the often-renamed Edmonds Field at Riverside and Broadway are still well remembered by Sacramento old-timers. One 1940s Solons fan was a teenage girl named Adeline Garbarino. Adeline seemingly collected as much Solons memorabilia as she could get her hands on—baseball cards, player photos, and autographed balls. Adeline not only collected programs from local games but also wrote to other clubs in the league requesting those from out of town. But the heart of her collection, which is now part of the California History Section's manuscript collections in the State Library, are the scrapbooks she kept for every season from 1944 to 1949. Consisting mainly of clippings taken from the *Sacramento Bee*, a perusal of one of these scrapbooks literally takes one back to that season, and enables one to follow

the Solons from game to game and watch their rise and fall in the standings, as well as pre-and post-season events.

Take the 1947 season, for example. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the *Bee* debuted Lee Susman's drawings of an animated baseball-playing Capitol Dome that accompanied every game report. How this character was portrayed depended, of course, on whether the Solons won or lost. Nineteen forty-seven was also the rookie year of catcher Eddie Fitz Gerald, whom the Solons immediately attempted to sell to a major league team. He was bought by the Pittsburgh Pirates in September, although a May 4<sup>th</sup> *Bee* column suggested trading Fitz Gerald to the New York Yankees in exchange for a new ballpark. Nineteen forty-seven was likewise notable for numerous power struggles between the owners of the team and the upper management with owner George Klumpp seemingly always at odds with general manager Yubi Separovich.

The July 4, 1947 double-header at Edmonds Field between the Solons and the San Diego Padres erupted into a free-for-all after umpire Lon Warnecke gave what most local fans regarded as a bad call that favored the visiting team. Beer bottles were thrown onto the field, and Solons manager Dick Bartell got into a fistfight with Padres catcher Tom Seats, for which he earned a fifty-dollar fine and a five-game suspension. Nor did Bartell get along particularly well with his own players, especially pitcher Red Mann. On August 1st, Mann was traded to the Seattle Rainiers along with pitchers Guy Fletcher (the team's leading right-hander since 1944), Bud Beasley (a fondly-remembered Reno high school teacher

Below: On April 3, 1947 Lee Susman's drawings of a baseball-slugging Capitol Dome debuted in the *Sacramento Bee* to animate the paper's report of the Pacific Coast League standings. Here, two days later, is the first "winning" image, when the Solons dumped the Hollywood Stars in the garbage. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, though, the Solons "split" a double-header with the Stars, and Susman's cartoon reflects that.

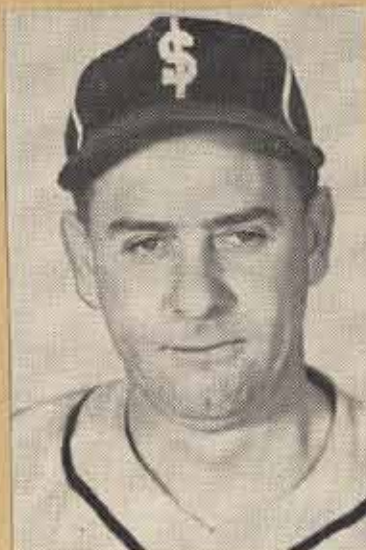




Shown here is a page from one of Adeline Garbarino's scrapbooks dedicated to Joe Marty. Born in Sacramento on September 1, 1913, Marty began his baseball career in 1934 with the San Francisco Seals, spent six seasons in the major leagues, and became the first Sacramentan to hit a home run in a World Series. In 1946 Marty joined the Sacramento Solons, became one of the team's star outfielders and hitters, and served as manager for half of the 1951 season. After retirement, Marty tended bar at the well-remembered Joe Marty's at 15<sup>th</sup> and Broadway (according to Sacramento baseball historian Alan O'Connor, Marty considered the place a "man's bar" and occasionally told patrons who ordered "sissy drinks" to take their business elsewhere).



Photo by Joe Benetti  
JOE MARTY  
1947 Solons Outfielder



JOE MARTY

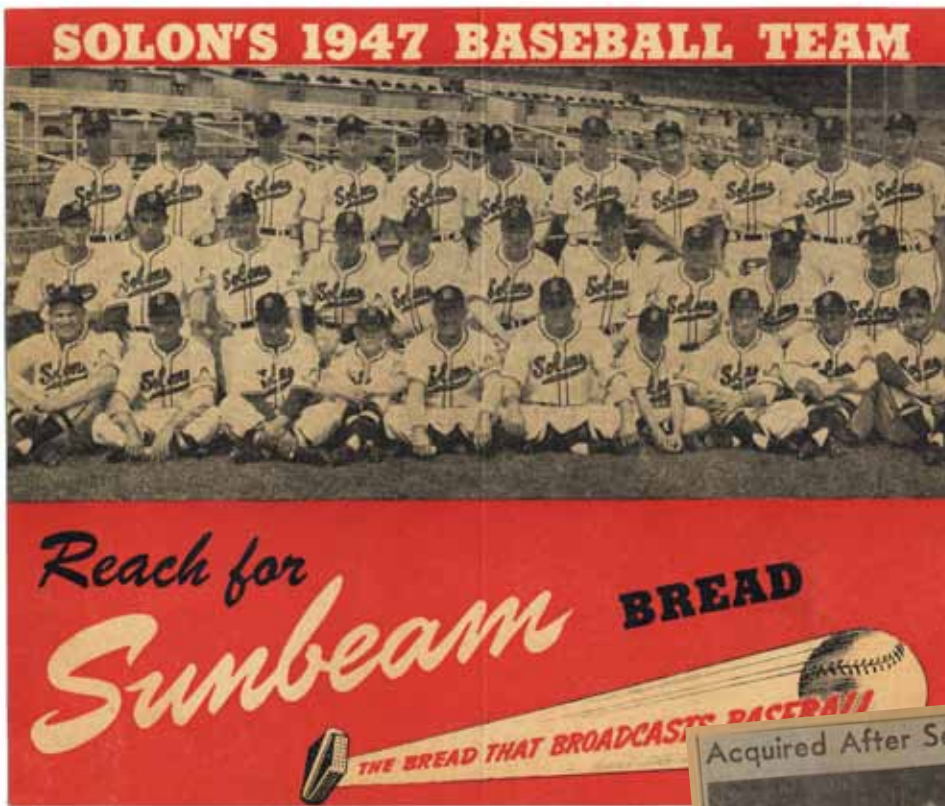


JOE MARTY



Joe Marty, Tom Nelson and Alex Kampouris.





Here we see "before and after" photos of the 1947 Solons. The start-of-season image is sponsored by local institution Sunbeam Bread, and the post-August 1<sup>st</sup> trade photo is accompanied by a caption spotlighting the new players and commenting on how much money the Solons spent in a "vain attempt to field a winning team." Of special note is the fact that, for superstitious reasons, pitcher Sig Jakucki refused to have his picture taken, not that it did him or the Solons any good.

who would join the team as soon as summer vacation started), and centerfielder Bill Ramsey. For these fine players the Solons got outfielder John Rucker, and pitchers Charlie Ripple, Rex Cecil, and former St. Louis Brown Sig Jakucki, who would supposedly give the Solons the shot in the arm they needed. Jakucki was a good pitcher when sober but had a reputation for erratic behavior when not—a trait one might assume the Solons' management would have heard of. Sure enough, Jakucki jumped ship on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and hopped a bus for Texas without notifying anyone ahead of time. The Solons finished four games out of the cellar, and Bartell was soon out as manager (after the August 1<sup>st</sup> trade, a *Bee* reader named Elmo Kelly suggested that perhaps the Solons could have also traded Bartell for Rainiers manager Jo Jo White).

Maybe the Solons *should* have traded Eddie Fitz Gerald to the Yankees for a new ballpark, since the burning of Edmonds Field on July 11, 1948 put the team on the road for the rest of the season and caused it to finish in last place. Adeline Garbarino's scrapbooks chronicled this unfortunate event, and everything else through the following season. The Solons continued playing in Sacramento through 1960, after which, due to the westward migration of Major League Baseball and the televising of games, the team moved to Hawaii, leaving Sacramento starved for good baseball for many years. But Adeline's collection was not restricted to Solons material—she had a couple of team photos and programs of the San Francisco Seals as well. San Francisco had a PCL franchise from the league's beginning





(Above) Here we see signed photos of two of the Solon's best pitchers, Guy Fletcher (right) and Bud Beasley (left), both of whom went to the Seattle Rainiers in the ill-advised August 1, 1947 trade. Beasley was a fan favorite for his on-the-mound antics, which were actually not for entertainment but to keep opposing batters off-guard.

(Right) No article on America's favorite pastime would be complete without an autographed baseball, this one signed by members of the 1946 Solons (which makes this author wonder what happened to his dad's 1962 New York Yankees ball).









A major tragedy for Solons fans occurred the night of July 11, 1948 when Edmonds Field burned to the ground after a double-header with the Seattle Rainiers, probably caused by a smoldering cigarette (at least the Solons won both games). The team had to go on the road for the rest of the season, which one might assume would have thrown them off-kilter and caused them to finish last. But they were already in the cellar *before* the fire. The 1949 team photo shows the spanking new Edmonds Field, which apparently inspired the team to finish third.



in 1903, but the team did not become known as the Seals until 1907. This legendary club played at rickety, wooden Recreation Park in the heart of the city's Mission District before moving, in the 1930s, to Seals Stadium at 16<sup>th</sup> and Bryant.

This author is a San Francisco native who never went to a Seals game, but whose father worked in the old Hamm's Brewery across Bryant Street. This building had a bar on its top floor called the Sky Room that provided a clear view into Seals Stadium. All Dad had to do was sit in the Sky Room and turn on the radio to be able to see and hear the games for free, especially advantageous after the New York Giants moved to San Francisco in 1958 and played at Seals until Candlestick Park was ready. I saw plenty of games at Candlestick but none at Seals, although I recall a bar known as McKenna's Double Play still in business well into the 1980s, kitty corner across 16<sup>th</sup> and Bryant from the old stadium site.

In 1974 the Pacific Coast League returned to Sacramento in the form of the Portland Beavers, who became the – guess what? – Sacramento Solons. Unfortunately, Sacramento no longer had a venue suitable for professional baseball, so Hughes Stadium at Sacramento City College had to be pressed into service. This inappropriate location, combined with the new Solons' generally poor performance, resulted in declining attendance at the games. The team moved to San Jose after the 1976 season. Professional baseball was once again absent from Sacramento until

the year 2000 and the advent of the Sacramento River Cats. The city now has a team that actually *wins*, playing in a small jewel of a ballpark with a decidedly family atmosphere and a backdrop of the Tower Bridge and downtown Sacramento. And any current fan can come to the State Library's California History Section, look through Adeline Garbarino's scrapbooks, and know that the Sacramento River Cats are carrying on a proud tradition. ❀

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The author would like to thank Alan O'Connor for his factual information and reminiscences on Sacramento baseball, and Heather Bratt for her help in organizing and processing this collection.



# Edmonds Field Destroyed In Raging Ocean of Flame

## Cinders Shower Streets

Historic Edmonds Field was destroyed by fire shortly before last midnight.

In the most spectacular blaze in the city's history, the entire plant was leveled in less than an hour as flames roared through the wooden structure and shot thousands of feet into the air.

At least three other homes were burned—two of them gutted—but miraculously there were no major injuries although there were many minor ones.

A **SMOLDERING** cigaret was advanced as a possible cause of the fire.

Yudi Separovich, business manager of the Sacramento Baseball Association, was not available for an estimate of the loss although it was reported several weeks ago that the most insurance any company would underwrite was \$135,000. The property has been valued as high as a half-million dollars, but that included the land.

The fire was discovered at 11:45 P. M. by Battalion Chief Peter Mangan as he was leaving a drugstore at 16th Street and Broadway where he had stopped for a root beer after seeing a movie in the Tower Theater.

**AS HE STARTED** for his automobile, parked a half-block west of the drug store, Mangan said he saw a red glow over the center of the ball park. He raced to the car, turned on an alarm by the two-way radio and sped on to the park. He halted his car a few hundred yards from the main entrance and tore up the incline, yanking the hump from the door.

At the top of the main passageway between the upper and lower tiers, Mangan grabbed a half-inch hose connected to the standpipe in the stands and turned it on what he described as "a red ball glowing midway between the press box and the backstop."

The hose was just 50 feet short of what I needed to hit that red ball," declared Mangan, "or maybe I could have stopped it then and there. But the water wouldn't reach. Suddenly the press box burst into flames and quicker than I'm telling you the heat was so intense it cracked in my ears."

**"I KNEW THEN** it was a goner and I would be unless I got out of there. I never ran so fast in my life. I made . . . thank heavens."

Two automobiles parked on the east side of Riverside Boulevard were burned badly, scores of homes were scorched in addition to the three that caught fire. The three were those of Roy Milner at 2605 Riverside, Clarence Baker at 2607 Riverside, and Harold Jordan at 2613 Riverside.



Edmonds Field

## New Ball Park Is Planned For Opening In 1949

By WILBUR ADAMS

Sacramento baseball fans have seen their last home game of the Pacific Coast League season as the result of a midnight fire which leveled Edmonds Field, but the directors of the local club hope to replace the old wooden structure with a modern fireproof structure by the opening of the 1949 season.

The 10 game series with San Diego scheduled to start with a double header here tonight will be transferred to the border city, with the first contest delayed until tomorrow or Wednesday.

The Solons were to have played five weeks in Sacramento before the schedule closes in September. All these games probably will be transferred, also. This would mean the local club will make additional



One of Sacramento's most spectacular fires last night destroyed Edmonds Field, the home of the Sacramento baseball club. The top photo shows the charred ticket booths in the foreground, with flames in the background lighting the blaze

which razed the grandstand, bleachers, dressing rooms and offices. The bottom photo shows the ruins from the top of the left field pavilion. Thousands of persons witnessed the fire. (Additional fire pictures on page 4.) Bee Photos



# Surfboards, Cocktails, and Bibles: Some Musings on Surprise Book Treasures

By Gary F. Kurutz

## INTRODUCTION

The process of learning about books never ends. Seemingly every day brings a new surprise in the Library's California History Section and General Rare Book Collection stacks. Books that were once thought to be ephemeral take on new significance as their context or importance is better understood and appreciated. Interests and values, of course, change and this element further adds to the appeal of these biblio-treasures. The following is a short disquisition on four books, two of which are new acquisitions and two of which have been "rediscovered."



The rare dust jacket illustration of the first edition of *Gidget*. The young lady holding the surfboard is Kathy Kohner, the author's daughter.

## GIDGET

Who would have guessed it? A first edition of that icon of beach and surfing culture *Gidget, the Little Girl with Big Ideas* is a rare and desirable book. Victoria Dailey, a distinguished antiquarian bookseller in Los Angeles, told me of her interest in *Gidget*, a book that had led to movies, television programs, and other spinoffs. I searched our catalog and found that we did not have a copy in any edition nor did we have any of the myriad knockoffs created in response to the 1959 movie starring Sandra Dee as Gidget and the TV program starring Sally Field. Last summer, we had the good fortune of acquiring a beautiful copy of the first edition in its original dust jacket signed by the author, Frederick Kohner.

Why use the words "rare" and "desirable" in describing a book about a surfer girl when working in a library housing a Shakespeare First Folio and Audubon's *Birds of America*? For generations, the Library's California History Section has collected books with a California "coloring," and we have also pursued books representative of popular culture since our state has always been a trendsetter. Somehow, though, *Gidget* escaped our attention. As that great bookman Lawrence Clark Powell put it, "A good book of fiction is better than a bad book of fact." *Gidget* definitely had an influence on California history and popularized the nation's image of the California beach scene and surfing in general. Names like the Big

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Kahoona and Moon Doggie and slang like “bitchin’” became common place, and Malibu Point certainly emerged as a destination. In addition, the book paints a fascinating picture of a teenage girl trying to break into and gain acceptance in a sport dominated by the guys. Reaching barely five-feet in height, the athletic fifteen-year-old soon won over the tall, bronzed surf riders. Early in the book are those wonderful lines about the derivation of the name: “The great Kahoona grinned. ‘It’s derived by osmosis,’ he said. ‘A small girl. Sort of a midget. A girl midget. Get it?’”

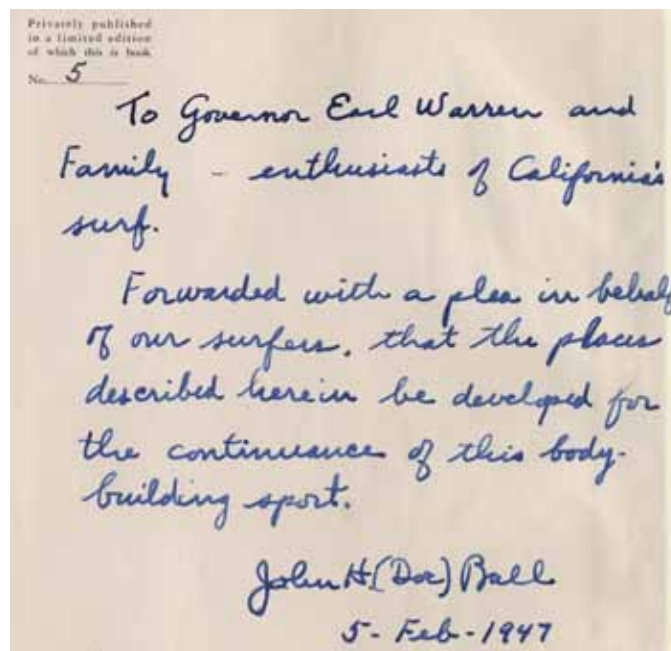
Kohner based *Gidget* on the experiences of his own teenage daughter, Kathy. A Czech Jew and one-time newspaper reporter with a doctorate from Vienna, Kohner escaped Eastern Europe in the 1930s and developed a successful career in Hollywood as a screenwriter. With his wife, Franzie, Kohner settled in West Los Angeles which enabled Mrs. Kohner to go to Malibu, a favorite destination. The experiences of his precocious daughter gave Dr. Kohner a chance to study the vernacular language and culture of his adopted land. He developed the novel in part by listening to Kathy’s “marathon phone calls,” using his reporter’s skills, and taking careful notes along the way. In this day and age of cell phones, Kohner would not have had that opportunity. Incidentally, the actual name of the girl in the novel is Franzie.

Wildly successful, the sales of the novel motivated Kohner to write seven sequels, including *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, *Gidget Goes to Rome*, and *Gidget in Love*. While none of these are in the Library’s collection, they will be added to its desiderata list. The 1957 first edition quickly went out of print and became scarce especially with its dust jacket intact. In a recent search of Internet antiquarian book sources, I located a first edition signed by both father and daughter with a staggering four-figure price. The original *Gidget*, Kathy Kohner Zuckerman, makes her home in the Los Angeles area not far from the ocean and its breaking waves and gives presentations about the history of this charming novel, its spinoffs, and life at the beach during the 1950s.

#### CALIFORNIA SURFRIDERS

Thinking of surfing led to a new appreciation of another little gem in the collection. Recently, we were contacted by the Library of Congress about our copy of *California Surfriders* by John H. “Doc” Ball. The question was this: should *California Surfriders* be placed in a rare book department? The answer, of course, was a resounding “yes!” Published in 1946 in a limited edition of only 510 copies, it is a masterpiece of surfing literature. The State Library has copy number five and the Online Computer Library Center’s (OCLC) WorldCat lists only the State Library copy.

Doc Ball, a dentist by profession, grew up in Southern California and mastered the heavy redwood long boards during the 1920s and 1930s. A tireless promoter when away from the dental



“Doc” Ball presented copy number five to Governor Earl Warren to help promote this “body-building sport.”



(Above) Jim Bailey and his surfing cocker ‘Rusty.’ This is a great example of Doc Ball’s skill as a surf photographer.

(Below left) George Freeth. Doc Ball wrote of Freeth: “This Irish-Hawaiian whose aquatic exploits are now become [sic] legend, is reputedly the first man ever to ride a surfboard on the California coast.” (Right) Frederick Kohner, the author of a work that popularized California beach and surf culture.





chair and drill, he helped form the Palos Verdes Surf Club. In addition to his skills riding the waves, he developed into a superb photographer and became the first Californian to seriously document surf culture through photography. Ever inventive, he created a special waterproof camera so he would be able to snap close-up views of his fellow surfriders. His slender book provides wonderful documentation of the beaches and surfers from Windansea near San Diego to Pedro Valley below San Francisco. He also included photos of such early figures as George Freeth "the mainland's first surfboarder," "Hoppy" Swartz, "Tulie" Clark, Tom Blake, Mary Ann Morrissey, and many more. The surfing dentist wrote in his foreword: "The purpose of this volume is to present pictorially, some of the thrills, spills, personalities and

places pertinent to surfriding, which since its importation from Hawaii in 1907, is now becoming California's favorite saltwater sport." In creating this "Scrapbook of Surfriding and Beach Stuff," Doc Ball started with an "archive" of more than nine hundred photographs representing "over twelve years of dogged waiting, vigorous paddling, freezing to death and plain hard work."

What also makes the Library's copy additionally special is the wonderful inscription by this multi-talented surfriider: "To Governor Earl Warren and Family - enthusiasts of California surf. Forwarded with a plea in behalf of our surfers, that the places described herein be developed for the continuance of this body-building sport." [signed] "John H. (Doc) Ball [next line] 5 - Feb - 1947."

Boothby's "Ten Commandments" gave practical advice with suggestions like: "Sell all the liquor you can, but use as little as possible yourself."

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## W.H. T. (COCKTAIL) BOOTHBY'S TEN COMMANDMENTS.

### I.

Always be on time to relieve the other watch. It is a good plan to make a practice of arriving a few minutes early so as to arrange your toilet and step to your station on time.

### II.

See that your finger nails are always clean and your person presents a tidy appearance.

### III.

Always appear pleasant and obliging under all circumstances.

### IV.

Avoid conversations of a religious or political nature.

### V.

When going off watch always dry and polish all the glassware and tools which you have used on your watch, and see that everything is in its proper place, so that your relief can work to advantage as soon as he arrives at his post.

### VI.

Sell all the liquor you can, but use as little as possible yourself.

## TEN COMMANDMENTS.

### VII.

If you are troubled with sore feet, bathe them regularly. Avoid patched or ragged hosiery, and wear a comfortable shoe with a heavy sole. Light soles, low-cut shoes or slippers should never be worn behind a bar.

### VIII.

Keep the floor behind the bar as dry as possible. It not only looks better, but you will find your health greatly improved by following this rule. Many bartenders contract rheumatism, neuralgia and many other serious complaints through carelessness in this respect.

### IX.

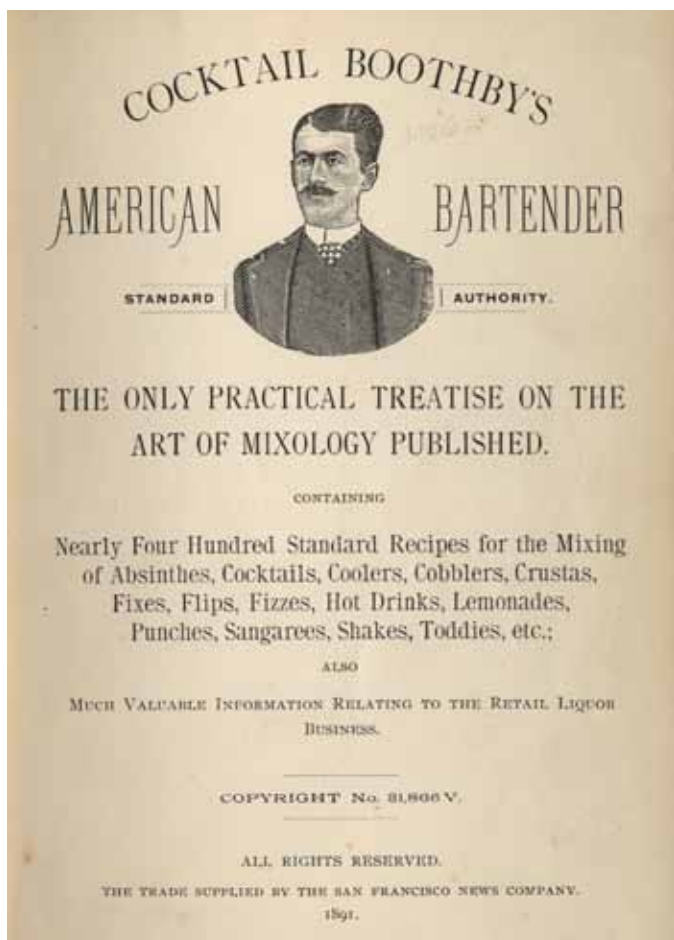
After using a bottle or tool always replace it before doing anything else. Make this a rule that should never be broken; and, when you are rushed with business, you will never be compelled to hunt for this or that, but you will always know just where it is.

### X.

After a party has finished drinking, remove the glassware from the bar as soon as possible, and dry and polish the bar top immediately, never allowing a particle of moisture to remain. This is a very important rule.







#### COCKTAIL BOOTHBY'S AMERICAN BARTENDER

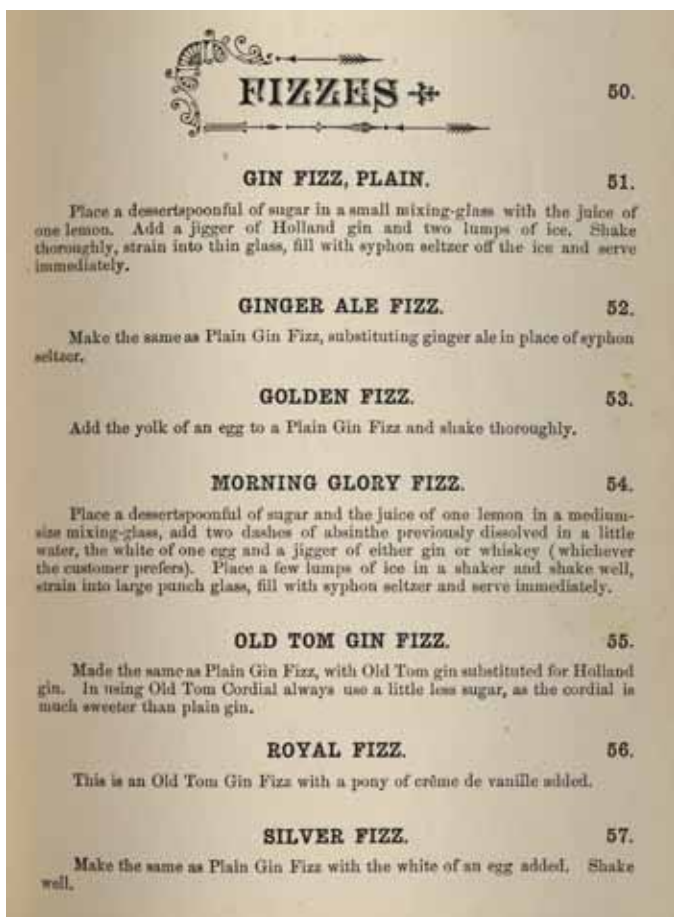
Earlier this summer the Anchor Brewing Company of San Francisco sent the Foundation a copy of a new edition of *Cocktail Boothby's American Bartender: The Only Practical Treatise on the Art of Mixology Published*. In the enclosed press release the distilling company proudly noted that this represented its “first step in the world of book publishing.” Anchor Brewing had indeed selected a fascinating book to reprint. I immediately checked our catalog and found that the Library’s California History Section did have a copy of the very rare 1891 first edition. What a fun book to have! A search of OCLC’s WorldCat revealed only two known institutional copies: the State Library’s and one owned by the library of the California Historical Society in San Francisco. This new edition reproduces the Society’s copy. In addition, the Society also possesses the scrapbook of this premier California mixologist.

Anchor Brewing Company’s book includes an insightful and fact-filled foreword by Fritz Maytag and David Burkhart, two experts on spirits, beer, and other beverages. As told by these editors, Boothby was born in San Francisco in 1862 and worked at a number of watering holes in the Bay Area including the Palace Hotel, Fairmont Hotel, and Byron Hot Springs. In the “introductory” to the first edition, Boothby listed himself as the “Presiding Deity at the famous Hotel Rafael Club House, San Rafael, Cal.” The artful bartender’s magnum opus came loaded with 360 recipes for the mixing of absinthes, cocktails, coolers, cobblers, crustas, flips, fizzes, punches, sangarees, shakes, and toddies. In addition, “Cocktail” Bill included sections on “valuable secrets for liquor dealers,” general suggestions on good bartending, and Boothby’s “Ten Commandments.” The section on secrets presented information on local taxes for liquor and tobacco and ways to correct sourness in wine, cures for “ropy” beer, and how to give beer the appearance of age. The latter was achieved by adding a few handfuls of pickled cucumbers and Seville oranges. His commandments for fellow bartenders included such practical advice as “always appear pleasant and obliging,” “avoid conversations of a religious or political nature,” and “sell all the liquor you can, but use as little as possible yourself.”

Not one to be bashful, this mixologist had other aspirations. In 1894, the same year that the founder of our Sutro Library branch, Adolph Sutro, was elected mayor of San Francisco, Boothby won election to the California State Assembly. He attributed his political success to support from the city’s liquor dealers. The bartender-politician represented the Tenderloin or 43<sup>rd</sup> Assem-

(Top left) Title page for Cocktail Bill Boothby’s landmark book.

(Bottom left) A page of Boothby’s recipes for fizzes.



bly District. As an assemblyman, he introduced several bills and supported the suffragette cause. Thereafter, he was known as the Honorable William T. Boothby. Following the devastation of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, Boothby became the “premier mixologist” at the Pacific Buffet at 4<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets. His legendary career hit a rough patch during Prohibition in the 1920s and Honorable Bill was arrested for violating the Volstead Act while bartending at the Orpheum Annex. The frustrated king of cocktails spent the remainder of his life mixing soft drinks at the Olympic Club and serving as the steward at the St. Francis Hotel. On August 4, 1930, William T. “Cocktail” Boothby died of cancer. The city lamented the death of this native son who brought so much joy to those who “bellied-up” to the bar.

While Boothby’s book was a pioneering effort in the Golden State, it does not rank as the first mixologist book published in the United States. That honor belongs to bartender Jerry Thomas. In 1862, the onetime California gold seeker published *How to Mix Drinks, or the Bon-Vivant’s Companion* under the imprint of Dick & Fitzgerald of New York. Unfortunately, the Library does not possess the first edition but it does have the rare revised edition published circa 1876.

#### A GOLD RUSH BIBLE

Not surprisingly, the Holy Bible is one of the most common of books with little appeal to rare book libraries unless it is printed or illustrated by someone of note or has association value. For example, we are pleased to have the elegantly printed five-volume Doves Press Bible of 1903–05; a 1581 Bible thought to have been owned by Fr. Junipero Serra when he was at Mission San Carlos; and a 1501 French Bible that was used by Newton Booth in 1871 for his swearing in as governor of California. Since then, Booth’s Bible has been used for the swearing in ceremonies of several other elected and appointed officials.

Through the generosity of the Foundation, the California History Section obtained a Bible with fascinating association value in that it came to California on board a Gold Rush ship. The Bible was published by the American Bible Society in the pivotal

year of 1849. It has the following presentation stamp on the front cover of its leather binding: “Steamer Eudora. Presented by the New York Bible Society.” The New York organization was founded in 1809 to spread Christianity and donate Bibles published by the national society.

This stout holy book was carried around Cape Horn in 1849 and is signed on the endpapers by Jacob Hand, Cape May Court [House] and Captain Henry Smith, Caroline Smith, Cape May, New Jersey. The *Eudora* was built in 1846 and was originally designed to handle New York commuter traffic on the Hudson River. Such calm and peaceful service, however, did not last. In 1847, the steamer is recorded as a supply ship along the Texas coastline during the Mexican War. With the end of the war and gold fever raging, its owners changed its mission to take Argonauts to the land of gold. According to C. W. Haskins *Argonauts of California*, the *Eudora* first left New York for California in January of 1849. Ministers of the Gospel naturally thought it important to send Bibles to this “land of gold and wickedness.” As related by *Boston Herald* journalist William H. Thomes, Edward Everett, then president of Harvard College, warned the young men of Boston, before going off to the diggings: “You are going to a strange country. Take the Bible in one hand and your New England civilization in the other and make your mark on the people and country.” This admonition could certainly have easily applied to the *Eudora*’s California-bound passengers but we have no way of knowing whether the “good book” actually kept eager gold hunters on the “straight and narrow.” In Sacramento, for example, a minister traded in his holy book for a drink at one of the many saloons that flourished during that rambunctious era.

As demonstrated by its subsequent history, not every voyage of the *Eudora* pleased its passengers. In 1851, six days out of San Francisco, its passengers mutinied causing the steamer to return to port. In 1855, a fierce storm off the Bay of Constitution in Chile, forced it ashore along with several other vessels. Its fate thereafter is unknown. But the Bible remains as a pleasant reminder of the steamship’s storied past. ☘





Sandra and Gerald Swafford record a California history book for the State Library's Braille and Talking Book Library.

# The Gift of a Good Book: A Profile of Sandra Swafford

By M. Patricia Morris

Sandra Swafford scanned the shelves intently for books in the State Library's Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) recording studio. She was searching for titles to show me that had been especially instructive to her, ones that she had narrated herself or reviewed for accuracy for other narrators. "Oh, one of the books was this one — *Earth in Turmoil*," she said with delight as she lifted it off the shelf. "It's about earthquakes and you can see the seismograph lines." I looked carefully at the thin squiggly blue lines decorating the book's fore edge. "Isn't that neat!" Then she quickly moved along to point out another book. The next one, like *Earth in Turmoil*, was among the fifty or so titles she has narrated for BTBL's recording program, most of them nonfiction, which is the genre she prefers.

The path that led Sandra to her long association with the State Library began in her native Canada. She was born in Portage La Prairie, a little town about forty miles from Winnipeg. Her family made their home in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, until she was twelve years old at which time her dad accepted a job in Fargo, North Dakota. Reminiscing for a moment, she said, "My dad had always read to us when we were little. He read the classics

to us, and it was just something that we did in our family — a lot of reading aloud."

After graduating from high school, she attended a small Presbyterian liberal arts college in Jamestown, North Dakota, where she was an English/speech major. She was active in the drama department and was cast in many plays, including *Gwendolen* in the *Importance of Being Earnest*, a play that intrigued her because of "the wonderful language and the preposterous behavior of the characters."

She had taught high school English for only a year, when she married Gerald Swafford, a recent medical graduate. They moved to San Francisco where he did his residency at Fort Miley Veterans' Hospital, and then the family returned to North Dakota with their two small children. She taught beginning speech and English classes for a few years and acted in two more Jamestown College plays at the invitation of the drama department's director. In 1980, the family moved again, this time to Sacramento. "We missed California so much that we came back," she said.

One day, she saw an advertisement by an East Coast agency for the blind seeking someone to record a medical magazine. Sandra thought to herself, "That's something I could do and I would really like to do that." She enjoyed reading aloud to her kids, and with her background in college drama, the work was a perfect fit and the beginning of her long avocation of narrating books.

For a time, she volunteered for a hospice program, not working directly with the patients, but reading books on death and dying and then reporting on them to the group. In 1986 a new

*M. Patricia Morris is the Bulletin's copyeditor and a frequent contributor to the Bulletin. She is active in several community organizations including Capitol Communicators. Previously, she worked at the California State Library and the California Department of Parks and Recreation.*

Sandra Swafford and granddaughter Lily Brown bicycled along the Oregon coast in celebration of Sandra's seventieth birthday.



Sandra pauses for a moment from her invaluable work in recording books for the visually impaired.

opportunity came her way, when she saw a notice in the *Sacramento Bee* soliciting volunteers for BTBL's recording program. Sandra headed down to BTBL's offices, then located in a big warehouse at 600 Broadway, and has been recording books for the program ever since.

In the 1990s, state economic problems threatened to shut down the recording program. When the program supervisor was assigned added duties, she could no longer supervise the volunteers. "We begged them to let us do it," said Sandra. "They said if one of you is willing to take responsibility for the recording program, then you can continue, and I did." The volunteers narrated books under Sandra's leadership, even after BTBL moved to its present location in the Library and Courts II building in 1994.

Over the years, the versatile Mrs. Swafford has contributed to the work of the Braille and Talking Book Library in other ways. "At one point, there got to be a terrible backlog of braille books in need of repair," she said. Half a day a week for several years, she lent a helping hand by repairing braille books. "Sometimes pages came loose and they had to be mended and sewed back in again, or pages got out of order. I learned how to read Braille numbers because I had to do that with my eyes, not with my fingers. I really enjoyed that," she said. Employing her skills as a writer, she has published several articles about BTBL and its staff in this bulletin.

When the California State Library Foundation Board was in need of a representative who was knowledgeable about BTBL, she was elected to its board of directors in 1999, and just recently started her fourth term. She will tell you emphatically that what she has enjoyed the most about her experience on the board is getting to know the other members. "The major reason I like them so much," she said, "is their unstinting dedication to the continued preservation and development of the Library and its collection. I respect their knowledge of what the Library means to the citizens of California, as well as their practical knowledge of finance, how to get things done, who might be helpful, etc. They are devoted and passionate advocates for the State Library, which I find admirable."

When asked what direction she would like to see the Library take in the future, she responded that BTBL is now in the process of converting from audio to digital recording. She expects that the new equipment will make the volunteer's job much eas-

ier. When the transition is complete and the kinks are worked out, she hopes the number of volunteers can be increased, as well as the number of books they make available for patrons. "I'd like to see both studios filled every weekday, recorded books pouring into the collection and into patrons' hands," she said.

Is there time for other pursuits? It may come as a surprise to learn that this genteel, academically-inclined lady is also an athletic outdoorswoman, although she is reluctant to admit to it. "I'm not an adventurous person. I don't like traveling," she will tell you. "I'm somebody who likes to be by myself." That said, the activity she has chosen to take her "out into the world" is bicycle touring. For her seventieth birthday, she did the entire Oregon coast with her daughter and granddaughter. She has ridden twice with her son from Ashland, Oregon, to Sacramento and has done a lot of touring with her brother. She rode with him on one of her favorite trips — "Winnemucca to the Sea." "It goes up over the high desert in Nevada and into lower Idaho and back into Oregon, south of Medford then out to the coast, and you end up in Crescent City. That was a wonderful trip," she said. Husband Gerry drove the sag wagon. "We could just pull the VW van off to the side of the road and camp anywhere," she explained.

When not touring, it's back to business, a new business, in fact. About two years ago, the Swaffords — father, mother, son, and a technical expert — formed a small company to record political nonfiction. The idea for the enterprise was born when her son was driving home to Eugene, Oregon at Christmas time and got caught in a blizzard. While stuck on the highway, he kept wishing he had a good political book to listen to. Upon arriving home he called and said, "Mom, I have a business proposition for you." That was the birth of Polity Audio, specializing in books on democracy/citizenship, politics, the environment, and economics. Using the Swafford's walk-in closet as a recording studio, they have produced seven titles so far.

In a recent issue of the *CSLF Bulletin*, Gary Kurutz, the Foundation's executive director and head of the State Library's Special Collections, described Sandra Swafford as a "devoted volunteer and supporter of the Braille and Talking Book Library." She has made accessible to the Library's blind and physically disabled patrons and to others as well, so many books that otherwise might not have been available to them. One could say that she has given to many people the gift of a good book. ❧



# Carl Eytel: Southern California Desert Artist

By Gary F. Kurutz

In the last issue of the *Bulletin*, we reproduced on our covers the beautiful oil painting of Sutter's Fort donated to the Library by Marilyn Sommerdorf. We received many favorable comments from Foundation members but many wondered how we could possibly match its beauty in the next issue. Obviously, this cannot be done, but it seemed appropriate to present to our readers the State Library's most important Southern California painting, *Desert near Palm Springs* by Carl Eytel. This gorgeous landscape was recently photographed in a high resolution digital format by Jesse Bravo of Sacramento, whose work was featured in the last issue.

Painted in 1914, the artist himself donated this desert masterpiece to the State Library. More than likely, the landscape hung in one of the Library's reading rooms when it was located in the State Capitol building. For many years, perhaps decades, Eytel's landscape then hung in the California Room on the third floor

of the Library and Courts Building. Following the move of the department to the new 900 N Street building, the painting was relocated to the outer office of the State Librarian's office. With the closure of the Library and Courts Building last spring, the painting, along with several others, was installed in the California History Room on the second floor of 900 N Street. The occasion of the move and the work of Mr. Bravo led to the formal electronic cataloging of the State Library's painting collection, including the Eytel. Jill Pease, a California History Section volunteer with a background in art history and art education took on the happy task under the direction of Senior Librarian Marianne Leach.

Carl Eytel (1862–1925), as demonstrated by this oil on canvas painting, was entranced by the Southern California desert and knew it as well as anyone. Born in Württemberg, Germany, and following a typical



Comfortably seated on soft sand and protected by a straw sombrero, the artist captures a desert scene while his loyal horse Billy looks on.



*Desert near Palm Springs* by Carl Eytel.

Teutonic education, Eytel came under the spell of the American West while reading about its explorers, settlers, and Native Americans in the libraries of Stuttgart. Following his dream of becoming a wilderness artist and giving up a comfortable life in Germany, he migrated to America in 1885 and worked on a Kansas cattle ranch. However, he found that his drawing proficiency needed improvement and he headed back to Germany to receive formal instruction. Now in his thirties, the would-be artist returned to America to sketch and paint. Refusing family financial assistance, he barely eked out a living by doing odd jobs and working as a cowboy. Finally, in 1898, he settled in the Palm Springs area on Tahquitz Creek. This gentle product of Germany found the brown and tan desert landscape much to his liking and spent the remainder of his life tramping over sand, boulders, and sagebrush as well as assorted reptiles and insects. Often he was accompanied by his horse “Billy.” Living like a hermit in an eight x ten foot cabin that he constructed out of scraps and barely surviving at times, he brilliantly absorbed the desert’s haunting grandeur and sketched and painted its rugged features.

Another European born traveler likewise became fascinated by the Colorado Desert. George Wharton James (1858–1923), a Britisher and former minister, wrote a series of books and scores of magazine articles about California and the West. His best known work is the two-volume *The Wonders of the Colorado Desert*. Published by Little, Brown, and Company in 1906, it

is now recognized as a “California Classic” by the bibliophilic community. James needed an illustrator and enlisted the talents of Eytel. The desert artist befriended the writer and supplied him with approximately three hundred pen-and-ink drawings making James’ work not only a delight to read but also a visual feast. In addition, Eytel served as a guide for James, and out of admiration for Eytel’s help and artwork, the prolific author devoted an entire chapter of his book to this “son of the desert.” Generously, James wrote: “He knows the Colorado Desert as no other man knows it.” He went on to give credit where it was due: “While I have done the actual writing, many pages of that which is written belong to Mr. Eytel, and I wish him fully to share in any praise.” *The Wonders of the Colorado Desert* quickly sold out and was soon reprinted. Despite the book’s acclaim, Eytel, a shy, retiring artist living in virtual solitude, received little in the way of material benefit from it. He then went on to provide the comely illustrations for J. Smeaton Chase’s *Cone-Bearing Trees of the California Mountains* (1911).

Eytel also attracted the attention of State Librarian of California James L. Gillis. At the time, the State Library sent out biographical cards to California artists, musicians, and authors. In addition, the State Librarian asked the recipient for any additional materials and in Eytel’s case, examples of his work. Found in the Biographical Letter Files of the California History Section are two letters by the artist to Gillis. Both provide fascinating information and demonstrate his extraordinary modesty.



[LETTER] EL MONTE, CAL. JUNE 6TH 1910

Mr. J. L. Gillis, Librarian Sacramento

Dear Sir:

Permit me to thank you for your letter of May 9<sup>th</sup> also for a former letter which I received two years ago while I was in Arizona and which I seemingly neglected. At that time I hardly considered my work worthy of any attention and I intended to write to you when my paintings could show better signs of improvement and talent than they showed at that time.

While I had a year and a half training in a German Art School in a drawing class I had to rely almost entirely on nature to teach me painting, a school which is naturally slow.

I am told that my work shows remarkable improvement since the last two years and consequently I will put on the list only those paintings which I consider worth while seeing.

My specialty is the Desert and its fascination, the palms in the cañons adjoining the Desert or where they are found in the open. I shall consider it an honor to send one of my paintings to the State Library as a sample of my work which will give an idea of the beauty of our Desertland and also as a sign of appreciation and thanks to the State of California which is now my homeland.

Yours very truly,  
C. Eytel

PALM SPRINGS, JUNE 14<sup>TH</sup> 1913

Mr. J. L. Gillis, Librarian  
California State Library  
Sacramento

Dear Sir:

I received your note of June 9<sup>th</sup> and wish to say that I certainly did not forget my promise to you but am rather anxious to live up to it. The reason I have not sent a painting was that none was good enough to be sent. I consider it such a high honor that I must select the very best painting I have. This will be one which either in my studio or in my place of sale at Pasadena should be wanted by everyone who is attracted by it.

Could you give me any idea how large the painting should be? The walls are I suppose very high and the painting should be on a large scale. I shall do my best to paint this picture during this summer. I will be very much pleased to hear from you in regard to the size of the painting.

Very truly yours,  
Carl Eytel

On the left is the mounded grave of Carl Eytel at the Agua Caliente Indian Cemetery before a boulder with a memorial tablet was put in place. He died in 1925.





Carl Eytel and Billy tramp through Chino Cañon near Palm Springs.

One can only imagine the delight in Gillis' eyes when the painting arrived in Sacramento. Evidently, Gillis did convey to Eytel that the finished work should be of grand scale as it measures three-by-five feet. The attractive frame further adds to its stateliness. It is signed in the bottom right corner, C. Eytel / 1914. Eytel's beloved palm trees form the primary focal point, but the eye is also drawn to the desert sand, the sagebrush, and a distant view of what is probably Mt. San Jacinto.

Although praised by James, Chase, and Gillis, Eytel made only a very modest living by selling paintings and sketches giving true meaning to the term "starving artist." In 1925, the often malnourished artist died from tuberculosis at a sanitarium in Banning, California, at the age of sixty-three. During his desert peregrinations, he befriended the Native American tribes living in the Southwest's deserts. Fittingly, he requested that his remains be buried in the Agua Caliente Indian Cemetery. This native of Germany is one of only two white men to receive this high honor. A simple desert boulder marked his grave. Friend and author, Charles Francis Saunders beautifully eulogized Eytel writing in August 1926:

But to Carl Eytel, pioneer of Palm Springs artists, working there long before the world of fashion had heard of the place, Palm Springs was his home, and the desert his life. He knew it in all seasons, in all moods, and he painted it with a sort of religious ardor springing from unfailing love, in season and out. Others have been better draughtsmen than he, but when you look at a canvas by Eytel at his best you are looking into what seems the desert's heart.

Despite Eytel's outward simplicity, he left to the world a rich legacy of book illustrations, travel journals, and the majestic landscape painting that graces the cover of this *Bulletin*. ❀

❀  
FOR FURTHER READING

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# New Legislator Profiles: Assembly Members Bill Berryhill and Marty Block

By Mimi Morris

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Twenty-nine new legislative members joined the California State Assembly in November 2008. The California State Library Foundation Bulletin will, from time-to-time, include interviews of the members and introduce them to our readers. We start with Assembly members Block and Berryhill.*

## ASSEMBLYMAN BILL BERRYHILL

Assemblyman Bill Berryhill (R-26th District, Ceres), though a “freshman” legislator, has a long history and familiarity with the State Capitol due to his father and brother’s service in elected offices. Bill Berryhill’s father, Clare Berryhill, represented California districts in both the Assembly and the Senate in the late 1960s and early 1970s before presiding over the state’s agricultural policy as director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture during the first term (1983-1987) of Governor George Deukmejian.

Bill Berryhill’s brother, Assemblyman Tom Berryhill, has represented the 25th District since 2006. Bill Berryhill’s election in November 2008 resulted in the rare concurrent service of two brothers in the California State Assembly for the first time since 1949.

Assemblyman Bill Berryhill, a native Californian, rancher, and fourth-generation grape grower, decided to follow the family tradition of representing his community in the State Assembly after several years of serving on a local school board. His service on the local school board provided a strong grounding in education issues and led him to believe he could make more contributions to education policy on a statewide level.

Similarly, his ranching background provided firsthand knowledge and understanding of the water issues facing California. Managing his extensive 650-acre ranch, which includes walnut groves in addition to wine grapes, gave Assemblyman Berryhill a deep appreciation for water and the need for water preservation

in California. He brings this knowledge and interest in water policy to the Capitol, along with his desire to preserve California as a place where agriculture continues to thrive. Assemblyman Berryhill is also committed to ensuring that the next generation of Californians can find good jobs.

He was able to weigh in on these and other important policy areas in his first legislative session through his participation on four Assembly standing committees (Budget; Education Finance; Elections and Redistricting; Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy; and Labor and Employment) and three select committees (Domestic Violence, Lowering California’s High School Dropout Rates, and Ports).

But, back to those winegrapes! Although winemaking has not been a Berryhill tradition for the last three generations of Berryhill wine-grape growers, Assemblyman Berryhill might be the family member who launches that effort. He got a small taste of winemaking with the production of two special, and, if the election results are any indication, well-received vintages produced for his recent election fundraising events: Campaign Red and Campaign White.

It is clear that this new member “loves the state and loves agriculture” and wants to be a strong voice for agriculture in California. One charming example of his appreciation for growing food in California is the basket of homegrown foods he keeps in his Capitol office to share with visitors (dried garlic heads during my visit). Besides the simple, obvious charm of seeing things grow, growing food is an extremely important economic activity in California. The real California economic gold rush has come not from all the gold extracted from our state, but from the abundant produce grown here and sold throughout the world. Assemblymember Berryhill clearly understands how important it is to the state to support that industry.

He also understands the important role that libraries play in our society. Assemblymember Berryhill believes that libraries will continue to serve an important role in the new information age because they will always be necessary “to hold and preserve



*Mimi Morris is the Executive Officer of the California Cultural and Historical Endowment, a bureau of the California State Library. Prior to coming to the Library, she served as the chief financial officer for the federal AmeriCorps program in California.*

important documents and stories of the past.”

Although he envisions more electronic, online usage in the future, he also recognizes the value of the physical library as “a place of inspiration and research, a place where kids can get excited about and engaged in reading.” Assemblyman Berryhill has positive memories of the Ceres Public Library, where he cultivated an appreciation of reading in his own children. His favorite recollection of a library is his high school library, which he described as a very “social place.” Today’s virtual socializers and jobseekers and researchers are still using public libraries, and the Assemblymember recognizes the great public service provided by libraries that have public-access computers available for those who would not otherwise have access to computers and the Internet.

When asked which period in California’s 150 years of statehood he finds most interesting, Assemblyman Berryhill’s first response was the 1960s and 1970s. As the son of an elected official in office during that time, he has some firsthand recollections of those turbulent times and considers those years with the Berkeley riots and other major social upheavals to be the most interesting in California’s history. After the Gold Rush era, of course.

In addition to these many, varied interests and pursuits, Assemblyman Berryhill is an accomplished watercolorist, with a penchant for painting waterfowl in the tradition of Maynard Reece. Two of his original, skillfully executed works hang in his Capitol office.

Assemblyman Berryhill was a guest of the California State Library Foundation at the December 2008 New Member Luncheon, where he got an introduction to the beauty and grandeur of the State Library, including the beautiful Maynard Dixon murals. The Foundation looks forward to sharing more of the State Library’s collection with this new member.

Welcome to Sacramento, Assemblyman Berryhill!

#### ASSEMBLYMAN MARTY BLOCK

Assemblymember Marty Block (78<sup>th</sup> District, San Diego), a native of Chicago, Illinois, was drawn to California and, specifically, San Diego by the “perfect” climate, geography, and beauty of the nearby mountains and ocean. He held multiple leadership positions in K-12, community college, and university governance before determining that he could be a more effective advocate for education in the California State Assembly.

His election last November was the next logical step in a career dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for all Californians. While spending twenty-six years as a professor and dean at San Diego State University (SDSU), Assemblyman Block also served as president to multiple entities devoted to education: the San Diego-Imperial Counties Community Col-

lege Association, the Board of Trustees for San Diego Community College District, the San Diego County Board of Education, and the California County Boards of Education.

Assemblymember Block’s political aspirations were launched when he watched John F. Kennedy at the 1960 Democratic National Convention. He knew then that he wanted to be a delegate and ultimately was a Democratic National Convention delegate for Michael Dukakis, Bill Clinton, and John Kerry.

As dean of education at SDSU, Assemblymember Block worked with school districts and county offices of education and saw that, very often, they were not working together in an effective, cooperative way, and he worked to improve the way they collaborated with each other. Similarly, he saw room for improvement in the self-governing and leadership skills of SDSU students and developed a class that led to a dramatic increase in the number of students who participated in local and state government following graduation from SDSU.

As the statewide co-chair of the California Community Colleges Underfunded District Caucus, Assemblymember Block succeeded in replacing an arcane formula for financing California’s community colleges with a more equitable student- and faculty-based funding mechanism that helped correct the financing imbalance for all the underfunded districts. The prior formula had funded San Diego at a much lower level than other regions.

In his first legislative session, Assemblymember Block has been able to craft education policy through his service on the Higher Education Committee. In addition, his impressive list of committee assignments includes three more standing committees (Health; Jobs, Economic Development, & the Economy; and Accountability & Administrative Review), four select committees (Biotechnology; Technical Education & Workforce Development; Community Colleges; and K-16 Articulation, Access, and Affordability), and two joint legislative committees (The Arts and Emergency Management).

In addition to the many committee assignments, Assemblymember Block serves as part of Speaker Karen Bass’s leadership team as assistant majority whip. He initiated legislation to authorize a feasibility study on the need for a California State University campus in Chula Vista, strategically securing bill number AB 24 to help promote his cause of creating the twenty-fourth campus of the system. The southernmost part of the state just beyond downtown San Diego has a significant need for a four-year higher education facility.

Since January 2009, Assemblymember Block has served on the California Public Library Construction and Renovation Board, which administers the Library Bond Act of 2000 (Proposition 14), a \$350 million commitment made by California’s citizens for the improvement of public library facilities throughout the state.





Even before getting involved in efforts to construct and renovate public libraries in California, Assemblymember Block recognized the critical role

played by neighborhood libraries in providing computer/web-based access to communities of color. His own district is very diverse, and the banks of public access computers are always full. He is excited about the planned construction of a new main library in downtown San Diego. There has been discussion of establishing a new downtown branch for the last thirty years, and the current joint-use plan incorporates a high school into the project, along with a theatre and a coffeehouse. The resulting facility will be a social and cultural center for the City of San Diego, exposing many more students and downtown workers to the resources available at the library. That \$108 million project will receive \$20 million from the Library Bond Act of 2000.

On a personal level, Assemblymember Block has fond recollections of time spent at his local Skokie, Illinois, library where he researched issues in preparation for his work on the junior high school debate team. And, in a sign of the evolving times in the world of libraries, he further recalls his gratitude at the invention of Lexis-Nexis and the virtual library after ten years of driving across San Diego from SDSU to access the San Diego County Law Library. Despite much appreciation for the online access to a library's collections, he believes there will always be a need for the "bricks and mortar" version of a library.

When asked which period in California's 150 years of statehood he finds most interesting, Assemblymember Block cited the Jesse Unruh era as the most interesting. Perhaps testimony to this interest is the inclusion on his Capitol office bookshelf of *A Disorderly House*, a treatise on the power and practices of former Assembly Speaker Unruh and Governor Pat Brown. The book not only chronicles Unruh's unorthodox style, but also reveals his deep appreciation for history and sound long-term policy. *A Disorderly House* was written by another very capable and respected former legislator from San Diego, James Mills. A former assemblyman and state senator, Mills was a historian by training and a former museum curator, who has the distinction of being the only San Diegan to have held the office of senate president pro tempore, certainly an inspiring mentor to this freshman legislator! (So far, no San Diegan has held the office of assembly speaker.)

Due to leadership responsibilities, Assemblymember Block was unable to attend the California State Library's December 2008 New Member Luncheon hosted by the California State Library Foundation. Consequently, Library staff look forward to sharing the State Library's collection with this new member in the future.

Welcome to Sacramento, Assemblymember Block! ☘

# Foundation Notes

## Louis Braille Bicentennial Celebration Held at the State Library

A month-long celebration of Louis Braille's 200th birthday, hosted by the Braille & Talking Book Library, featured the Louis Braille Bicentennial Exhibit and a lively author event, complete with garden reception and birthday cake. The traveling exhibit, a production of the National Braille Press, was installed in the lobby of Library & Courts Building II from September 1 to 25. The exhibit displayed vibrant panels with sketches and photos highlighting Louis Braille's life and times and the continuing importance of braille in a modern world.

Over fifty vision-impaired guests, some with companion animals, attended a festive September 9 event with historian C. Michael Mellor, author of *Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius*. Mellor recounted Braille's birth in 1809 (the same year as Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin), the accident that blinded him at age 3, and his invention at age 15 of a tactile reading system that opened doors of literacy to blind readers. In frail health his entire life, Braille died at age 43 of tuberculosis. His invention proved so flexible that it is utilized in virtually every language and in music, mathematics and the sciences. Worldwide symposia this year will honor Braille's unparalleled contribution to literacy. Indeed, Mellor's next stops on his book tour were Braille bicentennial celebrations in South Africa and Japan.

This exhibit and author event were graciously funded by the California State Library Foundation. The Sacramento Society for the Blind co-sponsored the author event. ☘

Laura Parker,

Communications Officer, California State Library



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Mrs. Christine J. Scribner, San Mateo  
**In Memory of Virginia C. Arrighi**  
Virginia C. Arrighi Estate, San Rafael  
Christine C. O'Neill, San Rafael

**In Honor of the Marriage of Tara Smith  
& Michael Moynagh**  
M. Patricia Morris, Sacramento

## CALIFORNIA HISTORY

American Girl, East Aurora, NY  
Michael F. Cole, El Dorado Hills  
Ann Curran, Oakland  
Victoria Dailey & Steve Turner,  
Beverly Hills  
David Dipple, San Francisco  
Glenn Farris, Davis

Jim W. Faulkinbury, Sacramento  
Robert Greenwood, Las Vegas, NV  
Carol Guthrie, Huson, MT  
Hachette UK Limited, Abingdon,  
England  
Kimberly A. Johnston-Dodds,  
Sacramento  
Mead B. Kibbey, Sacramento  
Craig MacDonald, Huntington Beach  
Kay Mattson, Citrus Heights  
Mimi Morris, Sacramento  
Scholastic, Inc., New York, NY

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Shumaker,  
Fair Oaks

Claudia J. Skelton, Seattle, WA  
Zazzle.com, Redwood City  
Sibylle & Val Zemitis, Davis  
**In Honor of the Clark Family Archive**  
Robin L. Brisco, Tustin

**In Honor of J. S. Holliday**  
Belinda Vidor Holliday, Carmel

**In Honor of Gary F. Kurutz**  
Grass Valley Male Voice Choir 2009  
Cornish Gathering,  
Grass Valley

**In Memory of Donald R. Fleming**  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary F. Kurutz

**Oregon California Trail  
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## CALIFORNIA CULTURAL & HISTORICAL ENDOWMENT

California Council for the Humanities,  
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