Planning Begins for Tuna Exhibition

Following the success of its latest photograph exhibition, San Diego History Center recently held a two-day planning session to prepare for its upcoming exhibition set to open in Spring 2012. Highlighting the history, science, economics and diverse peoples associated with one of San Diego’s most well-known and prosperous industries, this exhibition will celebrate the storied past of local tuna fishing.

In July, San Diego History Center staff worked closely with consultant Janet Kamien to initiate the development phase of this project. Ms. Kamien is a member of The Museum Group, a consortium of senior-level museum professionals who offer a wide variety of services to diverse institutions throughout the world. Ms. Kamien recently partnered with the History Center on its 2010 installation, Dressing the Part: Costume Design at the Old Globe.

This most recent planning session began with Ms. Kamien working with SDHC staff members to identify potential topics and themes to display in this exhibition. Together with David Kahn, we attended an international conference on tuna fishing held in La Jolla. The conference, called Kobe III, featured lectures by experts from various tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations. The discussion of contemporary issues relating to current tuna fishing practices will be considered in this exhibition.

SDHC hosted a two-day planning session with tuna industry experts, historians, marine biologists and former fisherman who played a role in San Diego’s tuna fishing past. It was very encouraging to see the level of interest and collaboration we’ve received thus far in planning this exhibition. This spirit will ensure that it is going to be one of our best yet.

* Nicholas Vega, Director of Exhibitions
An Expression of Appreciation for the History Center’s Members, Friends, and All San Diegans

In many ways it is difficult to believe that three years have flashed by so quickly! Yet it’s true, I will be stepping down as Executive Director effective August 31.

In August 2008 I joined San Diego History Center and have had the privilege of leading one of California’s oldest and most prestigious historical organizations during, admittedly, one of the most challenging economic periods our nation has ever faced. With a little luck and the strong support of the community, the History Center has actually managed to emerge from this difficult period as a stronger and more visible organization.

Over the past two years alone K-12 visits have grown by over sixty percent and overall visitation is up as well. We have secured major grants from prestigious funders such as the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, SDG&E, and Wells Fargo. Funds from these and other sources have enabled us to catalog our nationally significant collections, mount exciting exhibitions, serve our community’s school children, and develop the History Center’s first long-range conservation plan in over twenty years.

A number of our recent projects have elicited widespread interest, such as our exhibition Portrait of a Proud Community: Norman Baynard’s Logan Heights. The New York Times carried a story about the photograph identification project and it was featured in a half-hour documentary on Channel 4SD. Most importantly, innumerable guests at the opening reception came up to members of our staff to thank them for developing this project and exhibition.

In addition to having worked on so many rewarding projects, I particularly value the opportunity I have had to meet so many wonderful people in San Diego. Everyone has been willing to help, generous with their time, and extremely encouraging.

I regret that I will not be able to collaborate with the History Center’s board and staff over the next few years as preparations shift into high gear for the Centennial of the Panama-California Exposition. The History Center is obviously destined to play a major role in the organization and celebration of the Centennial. I take comfort in the fact that I will be able to return in a few years and see, firsthand, what has been accomplished.

I know that the San Diego History Center is beloved by everyone in the community and I am confident that it will continue to thrive, with the community’s support and commitment, in the years ahead. Many thanks!

Best wishes,

* David M. Kahn, Executive Director, 2008 - 2011
Project Update: Enhanced Access to the E.H. Davis Collection of Indian Photographs and Drawings

In October 2010, San Diego History Center began work on an eighteen-month grant project to scan, catalog, and make accessible a collection of over 7,000 images by Edward H. Davis (1862-1951) that document the lives of Indians in San Diego County between 1903 and the 1930s. The grant project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, will result in a more-easily searchable database by spring 2012.

Edward H. Davis was a long-time resident of Mesa Grande who documented, photographed, studied, and wrote about Indian tribes throughout the Southwest and parts of Mexico. The David family donated his collection of photographs, negatives and journals to the History Center in 1986. Davis also collected ethnological specimens for George G. Heye, founder and director of the Museum of the American Indian, New York.

Work on the project has steadily progressed since last fall. To date, 5,138 images have been scanned and 4,357 catalog records have been created. The re-housing of approximately 2,100 original nitrate negatives into new, archival envelopes is complete.

In early spring, with the aid of Project Liaison, Larry Banegas, we formed an Indian Advisory Committee composed of members of various tribes including Barona, Jamul, Mesa Grande, Pala, Rincon, San Pasqual, Santa Ysabel, Sycuan, and Viejas. The Advisory Committee will provide information about the images in addition to guiding us on the handling of culturally sensitive images. A Scholarly Advisory Committee was also formed to help provide additional identification.

An important goal of the project is to hold Indian Community Meetings throughout San Diego County to broaden the circle of community members familiar with the project and to solicit additional information about the images. In June, we held the first Community Meeting at the Barona Reservation’s Community Meeting Room. Approximately 2,500 images and catalog records were printed and organized into binders which community members were invited to review and share information about the subjects represented in the images. With the aid of the Indian Advisory Committee we will hold additional meetings at reservations throughout San Diego County and continue to enhance the catalog records with more information.

Therese Chung, Project Manager / Cataloger

Portrait of a Proud Community Opens to the Public

San Diego History Center opened the long-awaited exhibition Portrait of a Proud Community: Norman Baynard’s Logan Heights, 1939-1985. The exhibition showcases the work of Norman Baynard, a professional photographer from Logan Heights who documented San Diego’s African-American population during a time of rising affluence.

The opening reception brought together many individuals who had been associated with Mr. Baynard and Logan Heights – including many of the subjects captured in his images. Mr. Baynard’s children Arnold Baynard and Truelene Ivey were in attendance. Together with other family members, they discussed Norman’s legacy and what it was like for him to serve as a primary resource for future generations studying the history of San Diego’s past. Also in attendance was San Diego City Council President Tony Young who represents District 4 which includes Logan Heights. Mr. Young has also participated in the identification process of Baynard’s images.


• Matthew Schiff, Multimedia Communications Associate

San Diego History 101: A Three-Part Survey Course

Do you know what city we would be living in if we kept our original name proclaimed by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542? Have you heard of the “Purple Lady?” How much money was spent to purchase “New Town” San Diego? Who was San Diego’s first “Million-dollar Congressman?” The answer to these questions and dozens of other fascinating facts about San Diego’s founding fathers, mothers, and events, can be learned in a special three-part survey course on San Diego’s past, from its indigenous beginnings to WWII. Using historic photographs from SDHC’s Library, accompanied by supporting documentation, and periodic visits to the Document Archives, this course will immerse you not only in San Diego’s past but also introduce you to the array of historic resources held within the SDHC Collection.

• Part 1: Indigenous Beginnings to 1885
• Part 2: Developing Resorts, the 1915 Exposition, and Military Beginnings
• Part 3: Military Presence, the Depression through WWII

Reservations are required for each session. Sign up for all three and receive a discounted price. To make a reservation and for upcoming program dates contact (619) 232-6203 ext. 129 or gselak@sandiegohistory.org.

• Gabe Selak, Public Programs Manager
Above: The 2nd annual Taste of San Diego Micro Brews even had nearly 200 attendees and raised over $14,000 for programs at the History Center. Photo by Doug Gates.

Left: The History Center hosted a group of service animals and their trainers. Photo by Gabe Selak

SDHC participated in the Balboa Park “Museum Marathon” where park employees Maren Dougherty and Heather Hart spent 26.2 days living, learning and sleeping in the park. Maren visits the archives. Photo by Heather Hart, Balboa Park Online Collaborative

Above: A group of volunteers from our annual appreciation lunch. Photo by Chris Travers

SDHC’s most recent Then & Now discussion on the African American Experience in San Diego. From left to right: John Owens, Dee Sanford (moderator), Ardy Shaw, Lorenza Taylor-Pace and Agin Shaheed.

Left: Ballast Point and Rock Bottom Breweries created a special collaborative beer for Taste of San Diego Micro Brews. Photo by Doug Gates

Right: Taste of San Diego Micro Brews Event Host Virginia Morrison (left) and Co-Host Terri Marconi McKnight. Photo by Doug Gates
Contributions to San Diego History Center

San Diego History Center gratefully acknowledges the following organizations and individuals for their support. Gifts and memberships are from the 2011 Fiscal Year (July 2010 to June 2011).

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Immersed in History, One Costume at a Time

One of the goals of the Education Department is to immerse school children and adults in the history of the region. This is often accomplished through costume try-ons of child-size versions of appropriate clothing representing people who have significantly contributed to the development of the region.

Our student attendance has grown dramatically over the past two years at both the History Center and the Junípero Serra Museum as well as traveling outreach programs to area schools. We realized we needed additional “period correct” costumes to accommodate the various programs. A request to construct costumes was sent out to student interns at Fashion Careers College and the San Diego Costume Guild. One of those who responded was Debbie Sullivan, a member of the San Diego Costume Guild. Debbie has been designing costumes for many theater productions, including Scripps Ranch Theatre, Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego City School’s Honor’s Theatre and San Diego and San Dieguito District High School. Thanks to Debbie’s generosity and talented costume designs, we now have adult and child-sized “Ah Quin” and “Kate Sessions” ensembles to share with our students.

Gabe Selak, Public Programs Manager

Education Intern helps to Increase Access for Visitors

I am an intern in the education department currently finishing my Certificate of Museum Studies with a concentration in Education from Tufts University. The final requirement of my program is to complete 200 hours as an intern in the field. I took this as a unique opportunity to explore a whole different coast and learn a vastly different history from that of my native Massachusetts.

As an intern at SDHC, one of my main tasks is to help the museum become more accessible to disabled visitors. This project includes researching and implementing inclusive programming for those who may be cognitively impaired, blind or have low vision, as well those who may be deaf or hearing impaired. I’m looking forward to helping the History Center become more accessible for everyone in the community. San Diego History Center has helped me learn so much about California’s past and I am thrilled to have found a place here.

Shannon Foley, Intern, SDHC Education Department

Shannon Foley (right) and Coralle Cowan help students learn about San Diego’s history. Photo by Sharon McFadden
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For more information about events or to make a reservation, call (619) 232-6203 ext. 129 or visit us online at www.sandiegohistory.org/calendar. All events held at San Diego History Center in Balboa Park unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change or cancellation.