

# HERITAGE

Volume 34 No 4

A Publication of the Tustin Area Historical Society

September/October 2009

## We Were Sizzling in Old Town *By Sharon Teter*

The first annual hot dog/brats booth for the Historical Society and Museum at the Tustin Street Fair and Chili Cook-Off was a great success!

The barbeques were hot and cooking at 11:00 a.m. and by 3:00 p.m., all 400 hot dogs and brats had been sold. We also sold Cokes and bottled water throughout the day.

A great team of volunteers, under the leadership of Co-Chairs Gregg Bunch and Bill Teter, made this all possible. Set-up began at 7:00 a.m. with Gregg, Bill, Frank Sellers, Mark Primrose and Sharon Teter. They were joined by Joe Spreklemeyer, Gretchen Whisler and Pete Beatty. Others joining throughout the day included Ed and Doreen Corwin, Sindi Corwin, Erma Zwirner and Don Larson.

A very special part of the entire day was the participation of the Boys Community Service League, a group of juniors from Foothill High School. They worked as an assembly line, wrapping and serving the dogs and brats. This group included Dylan Primrose, Derek Van Riper, Mario Vega, Sam Jones, Chris Burnet, Sam Schulte, Ryan Casey, Kyle Pendergast, Jack Taylor, Conrad Sparur and Josh Mygatt. A special and enjoyable feature was Chris Burnet on the megaphone at the front of the booth, luring people to buy, buy, buy!

A special thanks to Mark Primrose and Joe Spreklemeyer, who were there all day from beginning to end. A special thanks, also, to Paul Peal, who volunteered his



truck and helped transport supplies and equipment to the booth, then loaded everything again at the end of the day for return to their places of origin.

It was a great day for the Historical Society and Museum, and the volunteers agreed it was a fun day for all!

## He's Not Your Average Car Buff

Join us at our September General Meeting and meet Randy Ema, a really classic guy – a word that applies not only to Randy, but to the automobiles that are his passion. When you pass a classic car on the road, how many times have you thought to yourself, “It sure would be fun to own one of those beauties,” or “I can just see myself cruising down the highway in that?” Well, Randy knows all about the cars of our dreams, as he’s spent the past 32 years restoring and maintaining those automobiles we so admire. He specializes in Duesenbergs, Cords, and Auburns, and his restorations, especially of Duesenbergs, are always “back to original,” since he owns all of the original drawings and patterns for all the parts ever made for them. He’s known world-wide for his restorations, and has appeared on numerous TV shows, as well as in specialty films about automobile history and restoration. If you own, or would someday like to own, a classic, don’t miss this meeting. Randy will be discussing preservation and documentation of history – everything you’d need to know.

Randy’s interest in things historical isn’t limited to cars, however. He loves and collects antiques, along with admiring old homes and architecture. A native Orange Countian who graduated from Foothill High, afterwards earning a bachelor’s degree in history, Randy and his wife, Diana, feel fortunate to live in a home built in 1920. Can’t you just imagine a vintage house with a classic automobile parked in the driveway? How perfect!



### NEXT MEETING

**Monday, Sept. 21, 2009**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Tustin Senior Center  
LOUNGE  
200 S. ‘C’ Street, Tustin**

• **PROGRAM** •  
**Speaker  
Randy Ema,  
Classic Car Expert**

**Everyone is Welcome!**

# Historical HAPPENINGS

## If You knew George Like We Knew George, You're an Old-Timer



Scratching your heads  
over this one? From 1950

until 1961, George was the chef-attired mannequin who stood curb-side in front of Harold O. Ferdig's Hamburger Bar on Hwy. 101. Harold located him in L.A.'s Garment District and wired him to become the restaurant's 'spokesman' soon after opening the restaurant in 1947. A 2-way microphone between the mannequin and the kitchen allowed George to 'talk' to customers as they approached, to kids passing by, and even to out-of-towners pausing for directions at the curb on the busy highway. Locals anticipated his greetings, but travelers were first embarrassed to realize they'd stopped to talk with a mannequin, then quite startled when the mannequin offered up the directions they sought. Those experiences didn't begin to compare, though, with the shock of the deliveryman dropping off pies in the early morning when he encountered George, standing overnight in a dark corner of the storage vestibule. George did suffer the worst of that encounter, as the supplier lopped off George's head as he fled in terror! George was a huge hit with the rest of Tustin, though, even receiving yearly Christmas cards addressed to: George, Tustin, Ca.

Harold O. and Geraldine Ferdig moved their family to Tustin in 1946 from Michigan, where Harold owned a grocery store. Business was still depressed along with the general economy in the early '40s, prompting the move nearer to Harold's mother in Santa Ana. With no prior restaurant experience, Harold O. nonetheless decided to open a restaurant, and soon had built exactly the restaurant he wanted around the corner from their 'A' St. home – red and white inside and out, with picture windows facing the highway. He knew little about cooking, but in the process of securing a supplier for his restaurant, he met a man who did. Excelsior Creamery, a mile west on 1st Street, became not only his supply source - one of Excelsior's employees became the source of the restaurant's chili recipe, another employee the source of George's painted mustache! Excelsior provided the basics, while the restaurant's condiments came from Mr. Keeler's burgeoning food supply business warehoused, at the time, in a former chicken coop and garage on 2nd Street! The waitresses were military wives, living at nearby Hannaford's Trailer Park for lack of housing in the area. Jobs then were scarce, and as the Hamburger Bar was being built, one of the young women took quite an interest in it, though Harold told her they wouldn't be hiring. The day the restaurant opened, she was their first customer, lingering long over a cup of coffee. The lingering only lasted until Harold looked outside, discovering, to his shock, a line of customers forming on the sidewalk. He immediately handed her an apron and told her she was their first employee!

You could count on the Hamburger Bar for great food, and all of Tustin seemed to, including the local cops, sheriffs, and CHP officers (who took turns eating on the west patio where police calls issued from a microphone in the overhead pepper tree). Harold and Geraldine ran a thoroughly family-oriented restaurant from the day it opened. As you'd expect, with the family

*Continued on page 3*

## HERITAGE

A Publication of  
The Tustin Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 185  
Tustin, CA 92781

Tustin Area Museum  
395 El Camino Real (at Main Street)  
Tustin, CA 92780  
(714) 731-5701  
FAX (714) 731-7691  
E-mail: [tustinmuseum@att.net](mailto:tustinmuseum@att.net)  
Web Site: [www.tustinhistory.com](http://www.tustinhistory.com)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Joe Sprekelmeyer
Vice President/ Membership	Don Ropele
Treasurer	Tom Schramer
Recording Secretary	Margaret Pottenger

### Directors

Gregg Bunch	Joyce Miller
Bill Finken	Bill Teter
Dennis Hayden	Gretchen Whistler
Bill Leinberger	Erma Zwirner

Parliamentarian	Don Ropele
Museum Office Manager	Barbara Hannegan
Museum Site Manager	Bill Finken

### Committee Chairmen

Amenities	Peggy Braun
Corresponding Secretary	Barbara Hannegan
Museum Directors	
Displays	Joyce Miller
Hospitality	Bill Finken Don Larson
Programs	Erma Zwirner
Special Events	Margaret Pottenger Erma Zwirner
Newsletter Editor	Joyce Miller
Newsletter Production	Anchor Printing

## Museum Hours

Every Tuesday and Thursday

9 am – 2 pm

First and Third Saturday  
of each month

12 pm – 3 pm

**Open to Visitors  
Admission is Free**

# President's Message

It has been a quiet summer with enjoyable concerts in Pepper Tree Park and the Broadway In The Park musical, "Anything Goes". These productions were really a treat.

We are making plans for the Ice Cream Social to be held on Sunday, September 13, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the Pocket Park on El Camino Real. Everyone in our membership is invited and we will serve ice cream until it runs out. So, first come, first served. The park is next to the Vintage Lady Shop in Old Town Tustin. If you need more directions, please call the Museum at 714-731-5701.

We have purchased a new safe to store our photo CDs and other important items. The photo CDs are being created by Nancy Tschiderer and Mark Adamson, as they are making digital copies of our many historical photographs of people and places in Tustin and the surrounding areas. Our photos are beginning to fade due to their age and the TAHS Board felt it was important to save them by using updated technology. Since one can get hundreds of photos on a CD, it makes storage much easier. The safe will help to preserve and protect our photo history. By the way, we will continue to keep the old photos and store them as we have in the past.

*Joe Sprekelmeyer,*  
President

## Ya'll Come Back, You Hear?

And they do, don't they? With each September, students flock back to the old school house for another shot at education. It's that way now, and it's been that way forever, it seems. It was certainly that way back in the early 1870s when Miss Squires presided over ten or fifteen students in a single building. It was that way in the mid-1870s when the student population became so numerous that a second building was constructed. The original was used for the primary grades, the second for the advanced students. Other than that differentiation, the classes were ungraded. Tustin was still part of Los Angeles County at that time, with supervision and regulation limited to a yearly visit by a distant visiting school official. The teachers were pretty much left to their own devices in between and weren't much affected by these visits.

By the time Zeke Zielian came along in 1889 and was hired as principal of the new four-room Tustin Grammar School, the district had grown to include the canyons to our east, and encompassed almost everything from Costa Mesa to El Modena. His first interview with the Board of Trustees revealed that "... the school had not been satisfactory to the patrons, and the trustees said they wanted to be sure they did not make a mistake (regarding the principal they hired). Well, I was with them nineteen years and if they made one, they were a long time finding it out" (Orange County History Series Volume 2, 1932). Zeke went on to become one of the most revered educators Tustin ever had, and an annual picnic was held in his honor at Orange County (Irvine) Park into the 1960s. It was always well-attended by the former first-through-ninth graders who remembered him so fondly.

"Come Out and Play" at the Old Picnic Grounds Zeke's Bunch 1889 - 1908



Memories Cherished by All Who Attended Tustin School  
- - - Principal, Teacher and the Old School Bell

They called us together in days gone by—they are calling YOU again now, to our 10th Annual Picnic, June 12, 1938, at the Old Picnic Grounds (Now Irvine Park.)

Pack your lunch (We are taking care of coffee, cream and sugar) and bring all the folks if you can, but if you must come alone don't fuss about the "basket," there's a place, lots of places for YOU at that noisy tableful of "kids."

And, hear it first, YOU are wanted the pleasure you experience in greeting the friends of yesterday is amplified in the pleasure YOU'll possess to bring to them. Time passes, friends are passing. We want to see you, hear you, talk with you, and for the hour mark the clock back to those Golden Days of Childhood. "Come out it play with

**ZEKE'S BUNCH**

NOTE—No study, no classes, just "recess" all day.

*A. F. Zielian*

P.S.—Mark this date, June 12 on your calendar—tell your friends and be with us on our 10th Annual Picnic. If for any reason you cannot come, please write and let us know you are thinking of us.

## MEMBERSHIP COUPON

Join the Tustin Area Historical Society and keep your newsletter coming. Please send your dues or an additional gift today. All dues and contributions are tax deductible. Ask a friend to join!

ANNUAL DUES: (Please check one)

- \$20-\$34 Contributor
- \$35-\$59 Explorer
- \$60-\$99 Colonist
- \$100-\$249 Settler
- \$250-\$499 Frontier
- \$500-\$999 Pioneer
- \$1,000 Heritage
- Renew       New

Special Contribution as Friends of the Museum \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to:  
**Tustin Area Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 185 • Tustin, CA 92781

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Historical HAPPENINGS

*Continued from page 2*

home behind it on 'A' Street, their growing boys ate most of their dinners in the restaurant's back room, while their parents ran the kitchen up front. As a teenager, Harold R. worked there washing up the restaurant's dinner dishes, afterwards picking up his future wife, Eva Logan, for a milkshake (and impromptu car 'expo') at Merle's Drive-In in Santa Ana. A 'family business' had its limits, after all, though his father often asked the couple to pick up some forgotten restaurant need - on their way over to Merle's!

The Hamburger Bar closed in 1961, McDonald's and such soon (almost) filling the void, but that wasn't the end for George. He continued on to become famous as the 'up-front man' for Harold R. Ferdig's TV store located in the same building after his father retired. A curiosity to some, a terror to a few, George was a Tustin icon to many.

# HERITAGE

A Publication of the Tustin Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 185  
Tustin, CA 92781

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Santa Ana, CA  
Permit No. 6080

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### Ice Cream Social

September 13, 2009

## Accessions

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Hans Vogel   | Photos of Ronald Reagan at book signing in Tustin   |
| Betty Block  | Book: "Tustin Field—An Historic Journey"  |
| Joyce Miller | Photos of Ferdig's Hamburger Bar and Ferdig's TV and Electronic Repair Store  |
| Mark Eliot   | 2009 Yearbooks from Foothill, Beckman and Tustin High Schools, and Currie, Columbus Tustin and Hewes Middle Schools             |
| Tony Coco    | Photo of James Utt, Ruth Poe, L.E. Marsters, Tony Coco, and Ernest Osuna at ribbon cutting for street name change, Oct. 3, 1958 |
| Kathy Hansen | Assortment of carbon paper, tracing paper, ledger forms and file cabinet dividers   |
| Ray Carney   | Two vintage buttonhooks   |
| Guy Ormes    | Vintage Maxwell House coffee can with lid   |
| Purchase     | Replica of California Mission Bell  |
| Purchase     | Book: "A Different Shade of Orange" Voices of OC Black Pioneers   |



## FREE! 2nd Annual Ice Cream Social

Sunday, September 13, 2009  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

In the Pocket Park on El Camino Real, across from Armstrong Nursery, Old Town Tustin – Oodles of ice cream, toppings, drinks, cookies and socializing.

*Hope to see you there!*

### In Memoriam

Clarence Conzelman

Spencer Browning  
(TUHS Class of 1942)

### Welcome New Member

Jeff Lyngaas  
Nancy Tschiderer  
Mark Adamson  
Linda Bird