

# HERITAGE

Volume 40 No 2

A Publication of the Tustin Area Historical Society

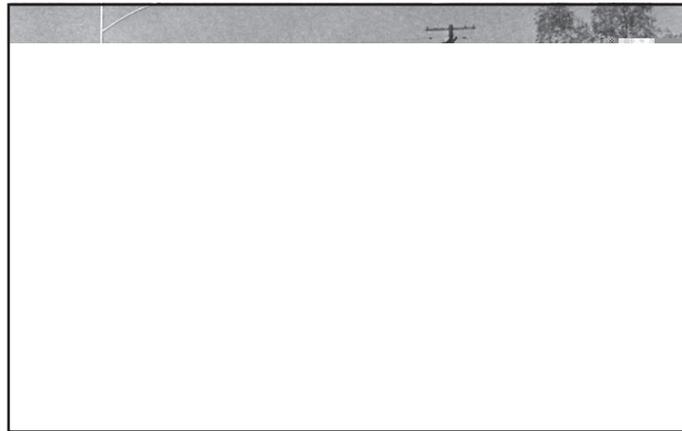
June/July, 2014

## DON'T BLINK

**T**AHS has just finished another successful Home and Garden Tour, an event which gives all of us an opportunity to feel justifiably proud of our wonderful town. Each year we love to overhear first-time visitors exclaim about the charms of our many vintage bungalows, or wonder aloud what life might have been like for the owners of our stately Victorians. It's gratifying to welcome so many people to the Museum that day where we get to tell them of Tustin's wonderful past, laid out in vintage photos of its talented and wealthy residents. Docents can talk ad infinitum about the talents of Madame Helena Modjeska, the much-acclaimed and widely celebrated European stage actress from the turn of the century who dwelled among the more cultured Tustinites. They can talk knowledgeably of Coralinn Rice, another early resident of Tustin and great friend of Madame Modjeska, who was often referred to as the "Sweet Singer of Tustin". She and her husband James S. Rice, a concert whistler, were known for the numerous events they hosted in their home where they, along with Helena Modjeska and others, performed for Tustin and Santa Ana's elite. In short, by the time the day of the Tour ends, we've hopefully filled visitors with the image of late nineteenth century Tustin as a mecca for the upper crust.

But wait.....did any of our visitors notice the only existing post card of Tustin from the 1950s, the photo looking north

on El Camino Real through the main intersection? This is decidedly not the Tustin of Coralinn Rice and Madame Modjeska. In their Tustin, the Victorian bank's ornate cupola reached for the skies as Tustin strove toward an exciting future, while a grand three-story hotel dwarfed the surrounding Victorian homes that gave those ladies comfortable assurance of their Eastern roots. It is also not the Tustin of today.



Our Tustin features inviting shade trees punctuating authentic vintage facades, and inviting first-floor restaurants in newly built but appropriately vintage three-story buildings. No, this Tustin, the low-profile Tustin caught for posterity on the postcard, could easily have been a mid-century town in any of the dusty agricultural valleys in southern California. The corner Rexall Drug Store (with the orange and blue sign that everyone knew meant quality) was exactly the same as ones in Bakersfield and Modesto. The bank (minus the optimistic cupola now), situated on the corner with doors opening on the diagonal for a 'welcoming' look, was almost indistinguishable

from the banks of Temecula and El Centro. The crisply uniformed attendants in the ubiquitous corner filling stations ("See the USA in your Chevrolet") beckoned the tired traveler just as they did at almost every corner from Porterville to Calipatria. And the only signal, forlornly controlling the center of Tustin, could as easily have been controlling the main intersection of downtown Fresno or Chula Vista.

Intervening years have polished the image of Tustin in our minds, turning it into something that we like to remember as lovely and somewhat romantic, but in truth, this postcard reminds us that

*Continued on page 3*

## OH, ARE YOU MOVING?!

Please help with a problem that's plaguing us. A number of our members are downsizing, moving to be closer to children and grandchildren, or just getting the heck out of town. With all the other things they have to think about, they sometimes forget to tell us their plans, and about a week after mailing out the newsletters, we can count on getting a few back with postage due since, as bulk mail, they can't be forwarded to a new address. We don't want to lose touch with you, and while you're certainly worth the \$.49 cents to us, the PO won't provide your new address no matter WHAT we pay them! Thanks.

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

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## 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

We are already half-way through the year—our busiest half so far. Another successful Promenade Home & Garden Tour took place in May, thanks to our many wonderful volunteers, underwriters and sponsors, and we are starting plans for next year (theme is “Puttin’ On The Ritz!”).

At your board’s April meeting approval was unanimous to go forward with an idea that for too long had remained in the discussion stage—scanning and digitizing old issues of The Tustin News that have been sitting in our Museum’s archives, protected inside special archival sleeves and boxes. And now, finally, these issues—from 1922 through the 1950s—will be preserved on CDs and also online in a searchable format. The actual process to prepare them to be shipped to the company we’ve hired to do this has been extremely tedious, but I can say firsthand it has been a huge labor of love. The Orange County Register, now owner of The Tustin News, has given us the necessary green light to do this project, as has Bill Moses, son of former owner William A. Moses II. We hope to not have to stop with the early issues through the 1950s; the Museum has issues from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s as well. We will need to rely on fundraising to get all the issues digitized, but this is an exciting start!

I am so honored to have been named Tustin Area Woman of the Year for 2013! I thank and appreciate the TAHS board for nominating me, along with wonderful Al Enderle (2008 Tustin Area Man of the Year) and the Tustin Community Foundation. I am equally proud to be in

the company of Tustin Area Man of the Year for 2013 and fellow TAHS board member/treasurer Bob Ammann! Bob was nominated by American Legion Post 227 and is currently serving as its Commander. Actually, I want to share with you that as we sat at our June board meeting we realized that now, counting Bob and me, there are SEVEN of your 13 current board members that hold that title (Margaret Pottenger—1966; Tony Coco—1976; Gary Siegel—2001; Donna Perry—2010; Wendy Greene—2012)!

TAHS board is taking a July hiatus as we usually do, and will reconvene the second Monday in August. I wish everyone a safe and happy summer, and hope that when you are not off traveling you will enjoy all the activities Tustin has to offer! Highlights are: Concerts in the Park (every Wednesday, now through August 13, 6-8 p.m. in Peppertree Park), put on by City of Tustin Parks & Recreation; 3rd Annual Celebrate Old Town Tustin on Saturday, August 16, with merchants’ special sales, entertainment, and events, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (<http://celebrateoldtowntustin.com/>) and Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts’ annual Broadway in the Park—this year an exciting production of “Peter Pan”—nightly from August 19 through 23 (visit [www.tacfa.org](http://www.tacfa.org) for ticket information).

And always, thank you for your support of Tustin Area Historical Society!

*Gretchen Whisler*

President

## Accessions:

**Phil & Linda Cox** – Glenn Pyeatt Certificate of Pharmacy; photographs of Orchard heaters and Knights of Pythias building  
**Marilyn Wright** – Photographs from Claude Martin collection  
**Beswick School** – Ephemera belonging to Frank Beswick  
**John Aschieris** – Agriculture ephemera  
**Del Pickney** – Tustin PD ephemera  
**Robert Marsh** – Tustin School ephemera  
**Bob Lurie** – Smudge pot lighter  
**Laura Evans** – 1942 program from track and field event that included four TUHS students  
**Stephanie Najera** – City of Tustin – DVD of State of the City video  
**Laurie Gibbs** – Photos from 1977 and 1978 Dog Days Bike Races  
**Marlene Graham** – Photo of Main Street circa 1925  
**Patty Baer** – TUHS Yearbooks – 1936 & 1937

there was a decade or two when we were just plain 'small town'. The main streets had diners with nightly "specials" to entice travelers, service stations with teenagers lounging by Coke machines, mom-and-pop markets where kids bought candy cigarettes and small wax bottles filled with soda pop, bars with pool tables, and even a gun and taxidermy shop. Yes, we were definitely small town, but looking backwards, it was a time we wouldn't want to have missed. Tustin, then, seemed to embody all that was best about us amid an innocence we didn't appreciate enough. Now when we catch Kevin Bacon in "Foot-loose" dancing down the street of a small

Midwest town, we remember dancing amid hay bales in the closed main intersection at the first Tillers' Days celebration. If we stumble upon Ron Howard grappling with teenage angst in "American Graffiti", his dusty Central California town reminds us of OUR dusty California town, his angst was our angst. Postcards, often poorly framed and occasionally showcasing a town's less attractive features, frequently provide a unique slice of history, capturing the truth of a town and its people. Tustin might not have been important enough in the '50s to merit more than this one postcard, but thank goodness it was good enough to merit this one!

## WE'RE AMONG EXALTED COMPANY ON THE TAHS BOARD

In case you missed the email, two of our current board members were chosen as Tustin's Man and Woman of the year. Bob Ammann, our treasurer, and Gretchen Whisler,



Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Puckett presents 2013 Tustin Man of the Year Robert Amman with a County of Orange Resolution.



Council Member Dr. Allan Bernstein and Mayor Al Murray present a Resolution from the California Assembly to 2013 Tustin Woman of the Year, Gretchen Whisler

our president, were among a strong field of candidates for the honor, and apparently we aren't the only ones who feel these people are very special. Congratulations to you both – you're highly deserving, and TAHS is lucky to have you guiding our future.

Photo Credit: John McGuire

## "CELEBRATE OLD TOWN" August 16, 2014

On the third Saturday in August this summer, Tustin merchants have planned a day-long celebration of Old Town. There have been a number of new businesses opened recently, and this will be an excellent opportunity to see what's new in town and to become reacquainted with familiar stores as well. If you haven't shopped in Old Town recently, you might be surprised by what you find.

Join the Tustin Area Historical Society and keep your newsletter coming. Please send your dues or an additional gift today. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Donation:

Tustin Area Woman's Club 8

Adrienne Ervin  
*(for newspaper digitizing)*



## New Members:

Isabel Engstrom



## Obituary:

Sherl Landers-Thorman

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## NEWSPAPERS AND HISTORY

“Oh, that’s old news – hand me that front section. You know how great newspapers are for polishing the window glass.”

“A new puppy? I’m not sure we have enough newspapers to handle this job – maybe we should subscribe to the daily paper, too. Pass the Sunday edition – quick!”

Newspapers – are they really only as good as yesterday’s news, useless afterwards except for messy jobs, and papier mache? Or should they be valued for the windows into history that they are?

We’ve long known what treasures are tucked among the pages of old issues of the Tustin News

that come our way. When we’re accessioned an issue, it’s usually because it was saved by someone for a particular reason: a birth announcement, a death, an award. It can add to a person’s history, or a family’s. It may fill in blanks in the history of our town. Street names are sometimes explained, and businesses of long ago located. News of war, the economy, and politics is always archived somewhere, but news of small events is easily lost. We are so lucky to have such an extensive collection of the Tustin News and are thrilled that it will be available soon to all!