CONSERVING MARY MAGDALENE PAINTING • JOIN THE 2012 CLUB

MAKING HISTORY
GATE HOUSE GROUNDBREAKING

WINTER 2011-12

PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

CONCERT TICKETS ON SALE EARLY

THE SALA BUILDING STORY THROUGH TIME

Cover Image: Circa 1920s
Going slow to go fast: The Gate House Preservation Project is here!

The concept of relocating the existing gift shop use out of the historic Sala building has been discussed among many for years. However, truth be told the “behind the scenes” leg work to make the Gate House Preservation Project actually happen has evolved over 8 years and involved unique ingredients not usually available to non-profit landmarks in the midst of a troubled economy.

Some of the special factors making this first phase of the project possible include:

1. Having a strong foundation like our Mission Preservation Foundation Board of Directors, made complete with a committed leader like George O’Connell. Our Board members appreciate that the project is more than just relocating the gift shop use to the front street. Our Board members know that this project represents a one-time chance for the Mission to create a more welcoming and memorable entry experience for our guests.

2. Having an awareness that preservation work is always involved with any new project at the Mission. So while we build the new gift shop space and admissions/ticketing booth, the project also calls for rehabilitating the 1916 original Gate House in keeping with its original use and eventually saving the Sala building and returning it to museum space.

3. Not taking “no” for an answer. There are and were many obstacles for this project - from geotechnical engineering, to funding, to addressing design constraints and respecting the views of the Mission and the historic significance of the site. The scope has grown to include repairing a failing wall as well as installing a new entry area for the public. It takes a certain willfulness on the part of every person involved to stay the course and not get overwhelmed by the barriers.

4. Having enough funding to make magic happen. The first phase, now underway costs close to $400,000. Each and every penny came from supporters, friends, and member proceeds. It takes many to do good work. To carry out Phase II will – for sure - require making sure Mission friends know of the opportunity to help out.

5. Finally, having a shared appreciation that a new chapter has started in Mission San Juan Capistrano’s history. One hundred years from now project supporters will be celebrated as people who made a critical difference to the longevity of this landmark, during most difficult economic times. They will be appreciated for being like those individuals who formed the 1910 Landmarks Club, and kept the Mission going for the next generation.

At the end we can be proud that no longer will we have guests enter a dimly lit box and ask themselves “Am I in the right place? Is this the entry to Mission San Juan Capistrano?”

Indeed, the entry to the Mission will mark a passageway to the past. The entry will greet every guest beautifully, respectfully, and in a manner deserving of Orange County’s only mission and the Jewel of the missions for the next one hundred years to come.

We all have a chance to make a lasting difference to a California landmark by way of the Gate House Preservation Project. I hope you will join our Foundation in making this next chapter possible.

See you on the path,

Mechelle Lawrence-Adams
Executive Director
Chief Preservation Officer

This newsletter is dedicated to Art Birtcher and Lula Halfacre for their years of dedication and support.
Mary Magdalene Painting

The 18th century Mary Magdalene painting that was recently exhibited as part of the “Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed” exhibit has been taken off display to undergo much needed conservation treatment.

The painting was identified as needing up to $4,500 in conservation work. However, without funding it sat in the exhibit as an example of an important collection piece in the Mission museum needing attention. Last fall, a visiting couple enjoying a special day at the Mission stepped forward to offer a generous gift to support its conservation.

As a result, since late October the painting has been in the skilled hands of mission art conservator, Aneta Zebala. The new painting is undergoing repair at this time. Once completed, the painting will be unveiled for all to enjoy. What is interesting is that these special visitors were not involved with the Mission and were not from Orange County, they were just two people enjoying and making a lifetime memory at the Mission. Their experience translated into a desire to make a difference and leave a mark for the world to enjoy.

With support, precious art works like this one can be saved for future generations to experience. Please follow the progress of the conservation of the Mary Magdalene painting as future updates will be provided.

To get involved in the conservation of artwork at Mission San Juan Capistrano, contact Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence-Adams or Barb Beier at (949) 234-1300.

Image on the left shows the painting before conservation efforts, the close up image above shows the visual results and progress of efforts.

Use your smart phone to scan to see up-to-date preservation efforts.
New Partnership

In collaboration the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, Mission San Juan Capistrano will offer a new “music meets history” program called “California Journeys.” It is a program developed by the Philharmonic Society of Orange County and Gary Francisco, better known as “Farley the Fiddler” at Disneyland, featuring music and dance of the early California pioneer Gold Rush days.

“The Philharmonic Society of Orange County is thrilled about its new partnership with historic Mission San Juan Capistrano to present California Journeys at the Mission,” said Rita Major, Director of Education at the Philharmonic Society. “California Journeys will take fourth grade students on a trip through the art and music of Old California, bringing the curriculum to life. Students will tour the grounds of Mission San Juan Capistrano with trained docents, and see music historian and musician Gary Francisco’s interactive show on the music and dance of the California pioneer and Gold Rush days in the historic Soldiers’ Barracks at the Mission.”

California Journeys will be offered nine Tuesday mornings beginning in January and ending in March at the Mission. The program begins at 9:30 a.m., finishes at 11:45 a.m., and is limited to 120 students per morning.

Tickets On Sale Early

Tickets for our 2012 summer concert series, Music Under the Stars, go on sale earlier than ever! Ticket sales will be available starting February 1st for season table buyers, February 13th for Mission Preservation Society Members who receive up to 20% off, and March 1st to the general public.

This year’s line up includes:

Saturday, July 7: The Long Run, Experience the Eagles with opening act, Fortunate Son: Tribute to John Fogerty and Creedence Clearwater Revival.
Saturday, July 21: A Tribute to Sir Elton John and opening act, Dandy DJ
Saturday, August 4: Hot August Night: Neil Diamond Tribute
Saturday, August 18: Jumping Jack Flash: Celebrating the Rolling Stones
Saturday, September 1: The Fab Four: The Ultimate Tribute to the Beatles with “Ed Sullivan” and opening act, DJ Peter Papadopoulos with Dancers.

Tickets sell out fast, so be the first to buy your tickets online this year. For more information, visit our website.
Saving a Landmark

The Mission is in the process of carrying out a highly significant two phase construction plan of the Gate House Preservation Project. This is a project that will allow for the relocation of the gift shop use from a historically significant building to the front street; one that will make a historic building available for preservation treatment, and ultimately generate more interpretive or museum space in which to share the stories of the Mission. The project also allows for a safer group entry, better arrival experience for the guests, and provides the public with a plaza outside the Mission walls.

In the end, the project will re-introduce long gone historic elements that were lost in the 1950s during various under-designed and under-funded changes to the ticket building. When completed, the project will stand strong as an architectural statement.

The $3.3 million project is in the process of fundraising to allow for the eventual construction of Phase II. (Please note that Phase I began in December 2011 and will continue into the Spring of 2012.)

Phase I includes the reconstruction of the now failing perimeter wall situated along Camino Capistrano, the installation of a new larger and more welcoming group entry, and the construction of the public plaza.

One of the key elements of this first phase is the rehabilitation and preservation of the original 1916 Gate House building, which is currently in distress and needs intervening treatment to ensure that it will be enjoyed as part of the historic Mission complex for generations to come.

The organization is committed to protecting the guest experience, maintaining safe access, and continuing to deliver outstanding education programs and visitor services during construction. While at times access may be re-directed or certain areas partially closed, our team will make every effort to minimize interruptions to access and guest services during construction. The Mission is open 363 days a year barring weather concerns or any safety issues.

Phase II involves construction of gift shop and is pending fundraising.

To get involved with this project, please call (949) 234-1311.

“I am excited to witness the start of construction on the first new building at Mission San Juan Capistrano since the 1950’s,” said George O’Connell, President of the Mission Preservation Foundation Board. “Together we are making history and insuring that this great landmark will be around for many generations to come.”
The Sala Building

The building, which now serves as the privately operated gift shop, is one of the most historic buildings on the grounds of Mission San Juan Capistrano. Staff and volunteers refer to the building as the “sala,” which is a Spanish word for “reception room” or “parlor.” Although the building did serve as a sala during its tenure, it also served as a temporary soldiers barracks, housing for craftsmen, a dining room, the Forster’s family living space, a church, a museum, and a gift shop.

Some important dates in the history of the Sala:

1778—A temporary church structure was made of upright poles plastered in mud in the current location of the building today.

1782—The original was reconstructed using adobe and was temporarily used as a soldiers barracks.

1791—After refurbishing the building, an archway was completed, extending around the entrance and connecting with the south wing. After the soldiers left for their new residence, the building most likely was occupied by craftsmen who supervised construction of rest of the Mission.

1798—The building was extended northward toward the Serra Chapel, and the rooms changed function.

New Museum Registrar

Mission San Juan Capistrano has announced the hiring of Jennifer Ring as its Museum Registrar, a position she began in November. Ring worked for nearly 16 years at Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, most recently as its Director of Registration & Collections, before joining the historic Mission, recognized as the birthplace of Orange County.

“I am so pleased to announce that Ms. Ring will be joining our Mission team,” said Mechelle Lawrence-Adams, Executive Director of the Mission. “In her role as the Museum Registrar she will continue to make groundbreaking progress for Mission San Juan Capistrano in its management of its precious collection.”

Ring will be responsible for managing the museum collection, with a focus on the collection’s management, storage, and long range plans that will take shape after the Gate House Preservation Project allows the relocation of gift shop use to allow space to be returned to museum use.

1845-1864—After John Forster purchased the Mission at auction for $710.00 he moved his family to the Mission and used the South Wing, and the sala building as his private family residence.

1891—The sala building was remodeled to be a temporary church until the Serra Chapel could be restored.

1924-1950s—Father O’Sullivan reinvented the space to serve as a museum.

1950s-2011—the building served as a gift shop.

2013—As part of the Gate House Preservation Project, Phase II calls for the ultimate relocation of gift shop use to allow space to be returned to museum use.

Ring earned a degree in History at Cal State Fullerton in 1991 and also did postgraduate work in Art History at Cal State Fullerton in 1998. Ring lives in Foothill Ranch with her husband and two daughters.
Thank You

(Gifts given from September 7, 2011 - November 26, 2011)

to Our Generous Supporters!

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WINTER 2011-12 | THE JEWEL 6

We regret any misspelling or errors. Names are published as records indicate.
UPCOMING EVENTS
(Free for members)

Saint Joseph’s Day & Return of the Swallows
Monday • March 19, 2012

Teacher Appreciation Day
Free Admission 2nd Saturday of the Month

Panning for Gold
Saturdays • 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Koi Fishing Feeding
Daily • 12:45 p.m.

Curiosity Carts (Hands-On Learning)
Tuesdays & Thursdays • 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Garden Tours
Wednesdays • 10:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Guided Tours
Monday - Friday • 1:00 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays
11:15 a.m., 1:00, 2:15, & 3:30 p.m.

Native American Basket Weaving
Wednesdays • 1st & 3rd of each month
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.