



The Branding Iron

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

OCT. NOV. DEC. 2020

President's Message

How we miss you all! So sad to see our front door closed on Saturdays. When the moratorium is lifted we will begin normal hours and will start off with a depression glass exhibit by Karleen Dougherty. With a bit of coaxing maybe Kimball will lead a Fall Bird Walk. Keep your eye on our website (www.RanchoDeDuarte.org) for updated information. In the meantime, be safe and wear your mask!

- Claudia

TODAY'S PANDEMIC IS TOMORROW'S HISTORY

Someday we will look back and remember how these uncertain times affected us. Today our lives revolve around statistics, masks, news reports, social distancing and uncertainty. There is a measure of fear and anxiety. This is not a lone pandemic. Here are a few previous ones:

NITA CAREY MAKES POLL WORKER HISTORY



Francis "Nita" Carey served as a poll worker for the eightieth time on November 4, 2008. She served starting in 1952 when Eisenhower was on the ballot. She has received numerous awards, one of which was from the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors for being the longest-serving poll worker.

"In the old days, I knew everyone who came in to vote, because we were a smaller town back then." Born in San Marino, she was sixteen years old when she married Ed Carey, now deceased.

Nita turned 95 on her September 2 birthday. Despite dementia, she reportedly maintains her sense of humor and grace.

Pandemics Throughout History

1. COVID-19 Pandemic 2019
2. SARS (2002-2004)
3. HIV/AIDS (1981)
4. H3N2 Pandemic (1968)
5. Spanish Flu (1918-1919)
6. Russian Flu of 1889 (1889-1890)
7. Cholera (1871-1824)
8. Small Pox Pandemic (1870-1874)
9. The Black Death (1347-1352)
10. Antonine Plague (165 AD-180 AD)

Dear Museum members: The museum has been closed for several months. We would be happy to extend your membership until July 2021. However, we can always use your support and if you choose to pay your 2021 dues, it would be very much appreciated and helpful.

The Museum Board

The Huntington has launched #BloomWatch in anticipation of its *amorphophallus titanum*, or corpse flower, blooming in its conservatory. But, with indoor spaces at The Huntington closed to visitors, the watch will be online only.

<https://www.huntington.org/corpse-flower>

CATHY LONG: THE CENSUS WORKER



Museum secretary Cathy Long has been busy during the summer months as one of about 20 enumerators working under tremendous pressure to get everyone counted in the Census in order to allow the region full funding and congressional representation.

"I estimate I have visited several hundred households in the area. During that time, I have encountered many different types of fears and anxieties regarding the Census. Our job is to educate and engage the public on the many benefits to the community with the goal of a partial or complete interview," she says. She has recently been transferred to an elite Census strike force. Dennis Rochlein, a long-time Duarte resident and museum supporter, was her Census Field Supervisor.

Cathy reminds us that the Census Bureau takes its stewardship seriously and all the information they receive is one hundred percent confidential.



THE TRUMMELS

Joan and Marc Trummel were proud to celebrate their 64th wedding anniversary in August. Unfortunately, their celebration

was subdued due to Covid. They moved to California in 1958 and purchased their home in Duarte in 1960. Says Joan: "Our children, Marc and Kara, went to Duarte schools and on to college. Our daughter taught in Duarte schools for 30 years, first at Maxwell and then at Royal Oaks, retiring last year. Marc served on the Duarte School Board for 10 years between 1975 and 1987 and then 2 years on the Duarte Planning Commission. They now enjoy life at Westminster Gardens.



TOKUO NAKAMOTO is director of the Rio Hondo College Observatory. He enjoys showing visitors the current celestial events.

Photo provided by Tokuo Nakamoto

For days, the topic of conversation went from the corona virus to a celestial event centered around the 6,800-year-old Neowise comet which was visible from the San Gabriel Valley if you could find the right spot! Professional and amateur astronomers studied the comet's arrival and scoped out the best areas. This comet is rare, says Tokuo, 6,800 years rare to be exact. That is nearly 87 times longer than the average human lifespan in the U.S.

As a young boy, Tokuo came to the United States from Japan in 1959. He almost immediately became passionate about astronomy, an interest sparked when he joined friends to view the Comet Bennett from the Lucerne Valley. It was then he bought his first telescope and began observing astronomical objects thereafter. Tokuo was a member of the Monterey Park Astronomical Society and about ten years later he joined the Stony Ridge Observatory in the Angeles National Forest. At the time he lived in Temple City but moved to Duarte in 1995.

In early 2019 Tokuo became director of the Rio Hondo Observatory which was opened in 1972. During normal times, visitors come at night to view celestial events and enjoy what Tokuo teaches them.

Tokuo does not always have his eyes to the skies. He enjoys trekking along local trails, climbing peaks and riding his bicycle from Duarte to the beach.

Tokuo enjoys many interests including peak bagging, rock climbing, bicycling, birding, entomology, and plant identification.

He keeps a bird list and counts as his favorite finds visits from the local pin-tailed whydah, and treks up Highway 39 to visit the bald eagles nesting in Azusa Canyon. Close to home he enjoys the song of the red whiskered bulbul. Tokuo is an active member of the Duarte Historical Museum and enjoys the annual birding expeditions.

Claudia Heller and The Duarte Historical Museum Preserve Local History

By Susie Ling

Sometimes, things are just meant to be. Claudia Heller grew up under the “D” of the Hollywood sign; she now lives near the “D” of Duarte. In her first visit to the Duarte Historical Museum in 1980, she met “Vicki” — that’s Victoria Duarte Cordova who was the great great granddaughter of Andres Duarte, and a descendant of three of the soldiers that accompanied the 44 pobladores that founded the pueblo de Los Angeles. Claudia got hooked, and she has been the president of the Duarte Historical Museum since 1992. She has also been the columnist covering Duarte for the San Gabriel Valley News Group since 1991. She is author of “Duarte Chronicles,” “Life on Route 66,” and “Curiosities of the California Desert.”

Claudia may have been destined for this. Claudia was the eldest of the seven children of Judge Lewis and Jean Ellen Garrett. Lewis Garrett was an Associated Press journalist while attending law school. Claudia said, “My dad was seldom home because he would travel from Hollywood to build his law practice in San Bernardino. Before the 210 Freeway, Dad was travelling daily on Route 66.” Garrett also had a fondness for local history and was the author of “Postal History of San Bernardino” and “Place Names of the San Bernardino Mountains.”

Claudia was the assistant editor of Los Angeles City College’s The Collegian newspaper when Monrovia author, Richard Singer, was editor. Claudia moved to Duarte in search for affordable housing for their young family. “At that time, we had never heard of Duarte or the San Gabriel Valley,” said Claudia, “but we loved that it had the ethnic diversity of Los Angeles, a small town feel, plus immense wild life.” In their annual Bird Walk, members of the Duarte Historical Society counted 70 different species of birds. The leader of the Bird Walk is Kimball Garrett, the ornithology collections manager at the Natural History Museum — and Claudia’s little brother.

Under Claudia’s able leadership, the Duarte Museum always has a wonderful range of interesting programs. They are finishing an exhibit on Barbie dolls with an exhibit on Depression glass forthcoming. They’ve done presentations ranging from local African American history, Buddhism, and the pioneering photography of Rudolph d’Heureuse. Claudia comes up with all kinds of ideas but she credits her partners, “We have a great team on our Board.” One of her best ideas was to erect a statue of Andres Duarte. Of course it was an “all hands on deck” community project. “We couldn’t decide between the soldier prototype vs. the rancher prototype submitted by sculptor Richard Myer. Vicki sat right there, looked at both, and preferred the rancher. Unfortunately, the 12-foot sculpture was too tall for the original site we planned,” laughs Claudia. Well, it looks fantastic where it was installed in 2007.

Duarte’s Historical Museum was founded in 1951 and had some illustrious leaders along the way including PCC Professor Ida May Shrode, author Lucille Morrison, Mayor Monty and Dorothy Montgomery, author Irwin Margiloff, Herbert and Margaret Meier, Councilmember Aloysia Moore, and renowned Monrovia and Duarte historian Steve Baker. The Duarte Historical Museum inherited the home of the very colorful 1930s Los Angeles district attorney Buron Fitts. “It was retired contractor Monty Montgomery that figured out how to cut the house in two and move it to its current position in Encanto Park in 1992. The moving house was followed by school bands and a parade. At that time, the park was mostly dirt and tumbleweeds with visiting road runners,” remembered Claudia. Then mechanic John Strunz left his estate to the Duarte Museum. “We make it happen. All our programs are free,” said Heller.

“I fell into the Museum president position probably the same way Alan became Board president of the Duarte Charter cable station,” laughed Claudia. Husband Alan explained, “Our boys were playing football for Duarte High and I would run around with a video camera, interviewing the players and the coaches... All the parents and coaches wanted a copy of my VHS. That’s how I got a show on Duarte’s cable TV. Mary Somerlott retired as the DCTV Board president, and when I went to the bathroom, the rest of the Board voted for me to replace her.”

Alan and Claudia met in their freshman year at Hollywood High. They’ve always been avid travelers. “When we turned 66, we retired and drove the 2,400 miles of Route 66.” With Claudia and Alan at the helm, the Duarte Historical Museum is a gem along the foothills, near where the San Gabriel River meets Route 66. Officially, the address is 777 Encanto Parkway. By the way, “encanto” is Spanish for charming.

This article by Susie Ling was published in the Monrovia Weekly News.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
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Email: info@RanchoDeDuarte.org

Instagram: [@RanchoDeDuarte](https://www.instagram.com/RanchoDeDuarte)

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND ORDERS FROM THE COUNTY, ALL MUSEUM ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED INDEFINITELY. PLEASE WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS ON OUR WEBSITE AT www.RanchoDeDuarte.Org. WE HOPE TO BE BACK TO NORMAL ACTIVITIES SOON.

If you would like to volunteer to serve as a docent once every few months, please call Sharman Warner at (626) 358-2001.

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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Open: Saturdays: 1-4 p.m.

1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.

Closed holidays

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