



The Branding Iron

DUARTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APR-JUN 2025



President's Message



The Blvd. Cafe

The Blvd. Cafe has made its way home again! After being “on loan” for 34 years at the Barstow Route 66 Museum, the sign has returned to where it started, thanks to the efforts of Alan Heller. Alan knew that the sign belonged to the Duarte Museum and not to Barstow. It had been loaned to Barstow when the Duarte Museum moved into its site in Encanto Park in 1991.

The Barstow Route 66 Museum was closed because windstorms had badly damaged its roof and the Museum could not afford to do the repairs. Fortunately, the Duarte Historical Museum had created a Route 66 Room, from a large storeroom, that had the space to accommodate this large sign. It was serendipitous.

The Blvd. Cafe was located on Huntington Drive west of Buena Vista in what is now the parking lot of Smart & Final (previously Ralphs).

According to the website: wordpress.com. “The Blvd. Cafe was a place you could pull up, have a burger at the service counter in the open-air, and get on your way. OR, if you wanted something a tad more elegant, you could sit down in the restaurant in the little stucco house that served as the back wall of the lean-to.”

The following article was written by Shirley Halburian - her memories of where she and her brother, Richard, grew up, working in their parents business.

In 1946, Susie and Tommy Tomasian, along with Susie's brother, Jimmy Zoker, moved from Connecticut to sunny California where they bought an orange juice stand that soon became the heart of their new venture. They expanded their business by adding a café that quickly became a beloved spot for locals and travelers alike.

For over forty years, the café, known as the Blvd. Cafe (because "Boulevard" wouldn't fit on the sign), served delicious hamburgers topped with fresh avocado. It attracted a diverse crowd, from movie stars like Red Skelton and Vic Morrow to doctors and staff from the nearby City of Hope hospital, as well as friends and family from the community.

The Café was a place where everyone felt welcome and at home. Susie and Tommy passed the Café along to their children, Richard and Doness Tomasian, along with George and Shirley Halburian. They continued to run the popular restaurant with the same love and dedication until 1989. Unfortunately, the Café was acquired through eminent domain to make way for a new grocery store development, marking the end of an era for the beloved Blvd. Cafe.



Pictured above in front of the Blvd. Cafe are Richard and Doness Tomasian; Shirley and George Halburian. Photo provided by Shirley Halburian.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

This year’s Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held on Sunday, January 26 at the Duarte Elks Lodge #1427 on Huntington Drive. The food was delicious, (catered by Jerry Delker of the Elks Lodge) and I especially enjoyed the homemade peach crisp for dessert. Yummy.

The Appreciation Dinner is a symbol of the appreciation the Museum Board of Directors has for the commitment of our docents and volunteers.

To our valued docents and volunteers - thank you for supporting the Duarte Museum and our vision. We truly are the luckiest museum in the world because of the incredible individuals who are our docents and volunteers.

You are the heartbeat of this museum; the driving force behind every achievement, milestone, and success. We are grateful for your efforts and dedication.

You are the face of the Duarte Museum, an integral part of the Museum family, our connection to the visitors. Thank you for being welcoming and cheerful.

I’m thankful for the help you have given in sorting the paper work from the storeroom files, putting the library books in order, cleaning artifacts, and scanning newspapers.

Your support has helped transform the Duarte Museum into the finest Museum.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Duarte Museum is updating its bathroom to ADA (Americans With Disabilities) standards. The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination in public and private places that are open to the public by providing clear, strong, consistent, and enforceable standards.

In our bathroom the lavatory will be placed in front of the window and the Victorian tub will be removed from the room. The walls and ceiling will be painted (no popcorn needs to be removed) and a new lighting fixture will be installed.



MUSEUM SPEAKER SERIES



Mysteries of the Desert - Alan Heller Sunday, April 27, 2025, 2:00 pm

Is this 600 pound object a Megaphone or a rocket part or an emergency siren or a measuring device for sound waves or none of the above?

Please join us at the Duarte Historical Museum when Alan Heller, author, photographer, and traveler extraordinaire, presents another one of his entertaining talks about the mysterious items he has found in the desert.

Let’s Take a Trip on California Route 66 - Lynne Miller Sunday, June 1, 2025, 3:00 pm



Lynne Miller, Board Member of the California Historic Route 66 Association will share the history of this famous road that will be celebrating its Centennial in 2026. Learn about some of

her favorite “Must See” places along California Route 66 and how her group strives to preserve and promote the “Mother Road”.

**Admission is FREE.
Light refreshments will be served.**

CELEBRATING A BEAUTIFUL LIFE



Sunday,
April 13, 2025
2:00 pm
Duarte
Historical
Museum

Sharman Warner was many things - a wife, sister, daughter,

aunt, friend, the “Queen “ of ping pong, In addition, she had held several positions at the Duarte Historical Museum—Docent, Secretary, Vice President, and Docent Coordinator. On April 13, 2025, there will be a Celebration of Life where friends and family will gather to reminisce about her life and share memories about what she meant to them..

In 2025, the Duarte Historical Museum will be closed April 19; May 24; July 2, 5; August 30; November 22, 27, 29; and December 20, 24, 27, 31.

SHERRI UHLIG’S TREE FALLS

The pine tree behind the Duarte Historical Museum that was dedicated to Sherri Uhlig was a victim of the January 6-8 severe wind storms that created havoc in our area by knocking down power lines, falling trees, and blowing shingles off roofs.

Many Duarte residents were impacted by extended public safety power shut offs during that wind event.

My power was not restored until 10 pm on Thursday, January 9, while the Duarte Museum lost power until Saturday afternoon.



ROUTE 66 INSPIRED UTILITY BOX COVERS



A Utility Box Art Program was launched by the City of Duarte late in 2023 to transform the 17 city-controlled utility boxes into beautiful pieces of art that would recognize the unique character of the Duarte community. Docent Alan Heller was one of the members of UBAP Committee.

Four locations were selected by the City Council and the work was completed in March 2025.

On the left, “Snapshots Down the Ol’ Route 66” is located on the southeast corner of Huntington Drive and Mountain Ave.

The two on the right, “Tracks of Time” and “Connected Journey”, are located on Highland Ave. and the northwest corner of Fasana Road.

MORE BLVD. CAFE

I went online to see what more I could find about the Blvd. Cafe. The photo below was on a website:

alongroute66.wordpress.com/quinta-scott-websites

The photo shows Susie Tomasian sitting on a stool at the Blvd. Cafe in 1982. The site has an interesting blog under The Blvd. in Duarte, telling about the bloggers trip through Duarte in 1982. Quinta Scott wrote that she remembered Susie and her genuine warmth.



JOIN DUARTE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Individual: \$20 Family: \$30

Lifetime Membership: \$500

Business/Organization: \$100

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

www.RanchoDeDuarte.org

OR MAIL A CHECK TO

Duarte Historical Society
P.O. Box 263, Duarte, CA 91009-0263



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RanchoDeDuarte.org



Duarte Historical Society & Museum
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Open: Wednesdays: 1-3 p.m.

Saturdays: 1-4 p.m.

President: Liz Reilly

Vice President: Judy Ann Blake

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Curator: Dilip Tiwari

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Photographer: Alan Heller

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