Parting Words from the President

This past year has, as usual, flown right by and is nearing its end. I feel much was accomplished by us all these last twelve months, and I would like to take this opportunity to touch upon how we have moved forward.

1. Obviously, the biggest news of the year, and the most important thing accomplished, was reaching an agreement with the City of Brea allowing us to make the old American Legion Building our permanent home. A great deal of work was invested, especially by my brother, Don, and everyone involved deserves great praise and thanks! This upcoming year we will begin cleaning the building up and making preparations to finally move in.

2. Approximately 52 new members have joined our ranks in the past year.

3. Due to the absolutely fantastic work of Kathy Canon, our Newsletter has been greatly improved and upgraded and has evolved into a very nice publication. Also, for the first time since the Society was formed, an issue was published each and every month.

4. We held our third annual “Spring Fling” in May, and it was another very nice evening and a big success. Brea-Olinda graduate, and former major league hurler, Randy Jones, was the guest of honor and featured speaker and did a fine job of entertaining those folks attending.

5. Brian Saul and Kathy Canon have created another Downtown Tour and have, thus far, conducted tours this past November and December. Others are planned, so keep an eye out and a Saturday or Sunday afternoon free! They do an excellent job and have worked extremely hard putting the tour together.

6. The Kinsler House and “Blue Bungalow” were added to the Historic Registry and had markers placed on the outside of each home.

7. We have significantly improved the image and perception of the Society, as well as worked hard at increasing the amount of news cover-continued on page 2
Parting Words from the President

continued from page 1

As all the other third-graders at Mariposa Elementary School. The children visited the museum, toured historic spots in Brea on buses, were introduced to the Mayor and visited city council chambers. They also had lunch at Brea City Hall Park, where the Fire Department dropped by to show the children the old Seagraves fire truck. The Society and Brea Noon Lions Club collaborated with Don, and the event was such a great success that it may become an annual event and be expanded to include other third grade classes at other schools!

12. Work was begun on restoring the Portola Monument, as well as gaining the cooperation of the folks at Ted Craig Regional Park to allow us to display the legendary baseball that Ted once had Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson autograph on the day of the famous baseball exhibition game in 1924. Due to logistical considerations, both projects are somewhat slow moving, but I am very confident that both will be completed in a realistic timeframe.

13. The Society’s by-laws have been updated, revised and cleaned up, and have been reviewed by two attorneys. Standing committees were also established.

14. The project of collecting a copy of every issue of our past newsletters continues. Just recently, Bill and Donna Fanning donated a number of issues that were missing. I would again like to thank them and Catherine Seiler for their contribution to this effort.

15. The size of the Board of Directors has been increased to thirteen (13). Now, nine (9) new board members with new and fresh ideas, energy, enthusiasm and perspective will be added! A very impressive slate of directors has been assembled and will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting, scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2002. Please plan to attend.

Everyone on the board worked quite hard this past year and donated as much time as was possible. I would like to thank them all, as well as the general membership for your interest, support and involvement.

Indeed, we have made great strides this year, but let’s all look forward to an even better and outstanding 2002!
Learn How to Build Your Family Tree

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the history of your family? The Brea Historical Society is offering a great opportunity to learn how to search for and build your family tree.

Genealogy classes are now in the final stages of forming and will start on Friday, January 18, 2002 at the Brea History Museum, located at 652 S. Brea Blvd. The classes will meet each Friday for six weeks at 10am. A one-time fee of $5.00 is required. This session, our instructor will be genealogist Caroline Rober. Field trips are planned, as well as instruction and assistance with unlocking the secrets to your family’s past.

Seats are limited in the classes, so be sure and sign up early. To reserve a spot, call P.J. Mansur at 714-528-4240 or the museum office at 714-256-2283 and leave a message.

Private genealogy searches can run into the hundreds of dollars, so don’t miss this opportunity to compile the history of your family. It is a wonderful legacy to give to your loved ones.

Learn more about the history of Brea

Brea: A Walk in Time.
Hosted by local historian Brian Saul. 2 hours of video memories of Brea's past. $14.95, incl. tax. On sale now at the Brea History Museum.

Brea: Celebrating 75 Years.
Written by local historian Theresa Hampson. $28.00, incl. tax. On sale now at the Brea History Museum, the Community Center and the Brea Gallery.

Brea: The City of Oil, Oranges and Opportunity.
Written by local historian Esther Cramer. $21.45, incl. tax. On sale now at the Community Center and the Brea Gallery.

Annual Meeting of the Membership and Potluck Reminder

The Annual Meeting of the Brea Historical Society Membership will take place on Monday, January 28, 2002 at the Brea Senior Center from 6p.m. until 8:30p.m. This meeting is important to all members because a new Board of Directors of the Brea Historical Society will be voted on and seated.

The 2002 Board of Directors nominees are:
John Bickel, Kathy Canon, Marie Domenico, Dave LaNeve, Edna Makins, P.J. Mansur, Kirsten Myers, Wilma Sauer, Don Schweitzer, Jim Schweitzer, Carol Wolfert, Pat Fox, and Jim Grosse.

The membership is also invited to bring a delectable dish and stay for the remainder of the evening for a potluck and then a panel discussion featuring special guests. The potluck designations are:
Members with last names starting with A - K:
Bring a salad dish
Members with last names starting L - R:
Bring a main dish
Members with last names starting S - Z:
Bring a dessert dish

After the potluck dinner, members of the Freedom Committee of Orange County will participate in a panel discussion of World War II.

The entire evening promises to be not only important to the future of the Society, but fun, interesting and thought provoking as well. We hope everyone makes plans to attend.

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More than Oil and Oranges
The Story of the City's Brea Jubilee History Book
by
Esther Cramer

While helping Orange County celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1989, Brea Mayor, Clarice Blamer, and I became well acquainted, since we were the two north county trustees for the Centennial. During those years from 1987 - 1990, we often rode together to meetings and events and sometimes discussed local history topics. In fact, she agreed to help after I was asked to chair a project to write the history of Orange County, with an emphasis on each of the communities, as one of our Centennial activities. We enlisted many local historians, artists, and writers, and our book, “A Hundred Years of Yesterdays,” was published by the Orange County Register during 1988. This was quite a feat, to put out such a book in one year. Copies were quickly depleted since the Register used the book to entice new subscribers and generously gave books to elementary teachers teaching local history.

One day, Clarice told me about Brea’s dilemma. She said Dean Millen had gathered quite a sum of money some years before and had turned it over to Cal State Fullerton, who agreed to gather many oral history interviews with Brea “oldtimers.” Somehow, there had been a misunderstanding. Only books of the orange interviews had been produced, but no single book on the History of Brea, as Dean had wanted, and the money was gone. The Brea Community History Project members had collected much ephemeral material - photos and articles - which was used in local exhibits. Dean persisted in wanting to publish a Brea book. Clarice confessed that Dean was worrying so much about this project, she was concerned about his health. Would I help? After my recent experiences gathering such local history information, I said, “Of course, let’s meet with Dean and see what we can do,” without realizing what I was getting into. Dean was so relieved he could unload some of the burden.

That began the year-long process of gathering, organizing, discussing, reading the Brea Oral Histories, and digging into my own Brea research and interviews done back in the 1960’s when I was writing, “La Habra, the Pass through the Hills.” Fortunately, my own files on the La Habra Valley, which stretches from East Whittier to Yorba Linda, with Brea and La Habra in the middle, yielded a gold mine of material I had forgotten about. My father, Claude Ridgway, had been Deputy Orange County Assessor, assessing personal property for both Brea and La Habra for many years, and many years before that he had worked on the first roads of early Brea as part of his job with the Orange County Road Superintendent, and I still had his books. We knew, and I had interviewed, many of the early Breans.

As we were working on “Dean’s Book,” we began discussing the publication. All agreed that 1992, Brea’s celebration of its 75th year - its Diamond Jubilee - would be the appropriate time for the book to be released. Clarice brought in Wayne Wedin, a good friend, former City Manager, and then Brea Mayor, to discuss the finances and plans for the publication. Wayne always wanted the best for Brea and the book was no exception. We sought the advice from Dana Cordrey, designer of quality, prize-winning local history books, who owned Premier Printing Company/Sultana Press, located in Brea. You could say, the rest is Brea history.

Again, I think all were amazed that we were able to

continued on page 5
meet our targeted deadline in 1992. We all caught Dean’s persistence! Thank goodness, we completed the book when we did, and Dean was able to enjoy it.

Are there things we would do differently if we had to do it again? I can’t think of many, because the history included all that Dean wanted in the book, plus much more. Also, it is all footnoted so future historians can find the sources. Read Betty and Dean Millen’s Foreward in the book. Also read the Preface, which outlines some of the challenges we met. Often I would proof read the photo captions before they were printed. For some reason, I didn’t take that opportunity. You can imagine my chagrin, after the book was printed, when I looked at the wonderful fold-out photo on pages 108 - 109, and found that the Brown and Dauser Lumber Co. had been misidentified and moved one block to the north! Actually, it was right behind Stern and Goodman’s store. Also, there were some funny typos that appeared on the map of Downtown Brea, such as “Big” Salveson, instead of Sig Salveson. My friend, Sig, would have laughed. But, for such a lengthy and detailed history, it is remarkably “clean.”

All in all, I think Dean was pleased with "Brea, the City of Oil, Oranges and Opportunity.” God rest his soul!

Esther Cramer is a local historian, author and Historical Society member.

Clues for Word Search

Brea History Word Search

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Answers compiled from the book: Brea: The City of Oil, Oranges and Opportunity

More than Oil and Oranges

continued from page 5
Did You Know?

Did you know that Brian Saul is back on Cable Channel 3? Did you know that Video Brea Line is featuring Brian's segments on Brea history every month?

Over the past few months, Brian has been all over town filming new installments of "Did You Know" for VBL.

Throughout the month of January, Brian gives historical perspective and insight into the founding of the town of Randolph, its eventual failure, then resurrection as the City of Brea. Video Brea Line airs Mondays through Thursdays at 10am and Monday and Thursday evenings at 7pm.

Brian is currently in the process of taping his February segment of "Did You Know". This installment will feature the history of the "mysterious, traveling" bricks of Brea Blvd. Haven't you ever wondered about those bricks that are stacked by the railroad tracks? Where did they come from? Where are they going? Why are they there? Did you know you can find out in February?

Special Thanks to our
Corporate Sponsors

Unocal Corporation
located at
376 S. Valencia Ave

Taps Fish House
& Brewery
located at
101 E. Imperial Hwy

Pacific Western
National Bank
located at
275 N. Brea Blvd.

Brea Historical Society
Board of Directors

Jim Schweitzer, President
(714) 529-0635

Brian Saul, Vice President
(562) 698-5339

P.J. Mansur, Secretary/Treasurer
(714) 528-4240

Jim Crow, Board Member
(714) 529-3295

Marie Domenico, Board Member
(714) 529-6641

Lloyd Dudding, Board Member
(714) 256-4324

Edna Makins, Board Member
(714) 529-1755

January Board Meeting:
Monday, February 4, 2002, 7p.m.
at the Brea History Museum,
652 S. Brea Blvd.

Museum/Office Location:
652 S. Brea Blvd (at the Brea Heights Shopping Center)
(714) 256-2283

Museum Hours:
Thursdays: 11a.m. until 1p.m.
Saturdays: 11a.m. until 2p.m.
Or call to arrange a special tour!

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