



THE GUIDEPOST

Newsletter of the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild

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IMAGES OF AMERICA – SAN FRANCISCO'S JAPANTOWN

By The Japantown Task Force, Inc.
Reviewed by David Orr

A handy overview through vintage photos of Japanese cultural history, Images Of America, is a splendid sampling of Japantown's past. Captions explain the contexts and relationships of subjects captured by the excellent photographers. This publication is a must for those working their way through the sights of our Japanese community. Take one with you on your excursion through San Francisco!

San Francisco's Japantown has a long tenure in the City, its roots go back to the post Civil War era, when Japanese were found settled in many districts of town. It appears that in the beginning local Americans' view of Japanese was somewhat different than that of the Chinese immigrants, who were deeply discriminated against and forced to live in the Chinatown enclave, without citizenship or property and voting rights until well into the 20th Century, post WWII.

Early positive high-level contacts between Americans and Japanese and relations with well-placed San Francisco sponsors and their firms seem to have been a guiding light for these developments. Take John Manjiro, for example, arriving in New Bedford Mass., a rescued ship-wrecked waif with nothing. A serendipitous meeting, while waiting aboard ship at the dock for landing permission, changed his life. A leading merchant took him in and sponsored his education, all the way through graduate school, meriting even a visit to the White House. He later, during the 1860's, became an important liaison between Japanese and American interests, commercial as well as diplomatic. His eventual return to Japan via San Francisco, Hawaii and the Ryukus (Okinawa) should have earned him the death sentence, penalty for leaving his country in the first place. Instead, he was lauded as a pioneer, welcomed home by his anxiously awaiting family.

Makato Hagiwara, another fine immigrant San Franciscan, whose own education and ambition was to be part of the City's culture. He was hired to be curator of the Japanese Tea Garden in 1894. He is credited with inventing the fortune cookie of world wide fame. These fortuitous beginnings can have only had significant positive affects on the racial opinions of the broader public.

Unfortunately, 1942 constitutes a horrendous memory for many older Japanese Americans. The amazing grace and good order with which the community moved obediently to relocation centers (read concentration camps) in the to them unknown wilderness of the American West and South is simply astounding. Executive Order 9066 of President Roosevelt directed all people of Japanese ancestry to be removed from both coasts to

[Japantown, cont'd page 7](#)

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T O U R
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The GUIDEPOST (ISSN 1097-2285) is published quarterly by the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild, a non-profit association established in 1984 to safeguard employment opportunities, promote the integrity of the profession through certification testing and continuing education, and foster a standard of quality, ethics, and professionalism among guides and operators in the San Francisco Bay Area. SFTGG is a member of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau and NFTGA.

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**Deadline for Next Issue:
February 10, 2007**

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Message from the President

This is our twenty-second year. In May we said farewell and good luck to one of our founding members, Ann Meagher, while celebrating SFTGG's continuing success. This year we completely revised the Certification Test, eliminated outdated material and made additions. We also revised the Study Manual so that it is up to date with the necessary corrections to existing materials. All Guides should have a copy of the manual as a reference guide (\$25 mailed). The web site has the membership roster as well as all of the program details readily available. We can now keep track of program attendance electronically which helps with membership renewals. We had eleven fantastic Educational Programs this year and are anticipating a wonderful Holiday Party at the Tonga Room on December 4th. Your 2006 SFTGG Board has been a dedicated group and their efforts have made all these things possible. Our financials and our administrative minutes have all been completed and are ready for the 2007 Board. This is all volunteer work and done in dedication to SFTGG. Thank you! Our special appreciation goes to the following members who help make our Guild function:

- Chris Cavalier picks up our mail at the post office and distributes it
- Pam Dahlen answers requests from our phone and web site
- Nancy McCormick certifies hours for eligibility for Certification

The following 2006 Board Members have served the Guild for two years and are now retiring:

- Liz Burton, Secretary
- Susan Guerguy, Treasurer
- Edie Marwedel, Certification
- Mary McCloy, Program 2005, President 2006
- Robin Perry, Public Relations
- Joan Wollenberger, Programs

Thank you all for a job well done.

The Board Members who will continue to serve in 2007 are:

- Andy Hartman, Membership
- Claire Manhart, Programs
- Cecilia Olkowski, Mentorship, Hospitality

We will be electing new Board Members soon. Please read the information about each member and place your vote. We need six new members with a minimum of three of them being certified.

I would also like to thank Ulla Kaprielian and her team for their continued dedication to the Guidepost.

I wish you all the best for the Holiday Season and happiness and success in your guiding and travels in 2007.

Mary McCloy, President

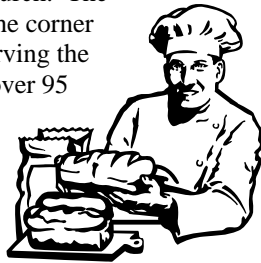
NORTH BEACH BAKERIES

By Anita Rao

September 13th, a glorious sunny day! Our guide, Barbara Dimas, being half Italian, as well as speaking the language, was able to flavor our experience through the North Beach Bakeries with cultural and linguistic nuances and insights. Her great-grandmother lived on Greenwich Street, where Barbara now lives. Her grandfather owned a bakery on Union Street, thus enticing her to start baking at the tender age of eight. Continuing with this legacy, she now works and organizes cooking classes and demonstrations at Sur la Table on Maiden Lane.

Our tour was peppered with historical tidbits, behind the scene glimpses, family pride, passion, individuality and entrepreneurship. The underlying theme was that of non-conformity, artistry and perseverance.

We met at Saints Peter and Paul Church. The inconspicuous **Liguria Bakery** at the corner of Filbert and Stockton has been serving the best focaccia in San Francisco for over 95 years! They have such an avid following that by 8 a.m. people are lining up to buy their creations. Once they run out, they close shop and it is *arrividerci* until the next day! I have personally experienced the disappointment and frustration of arriving too late.



The **Italian French Bakery** at Grant and Union is famous for, among other things, sesame cookies, St. Francis rolls, amaretti, and biscotti. Their famous *panettone* (Christmas cake with dried fruit) is available year round. The ovens date back to 1907. A personal thank you note, written by Francis Ford Coppola on a pizza peel, hangs by the entrance. The bakers work around the clock. We watched them reach into the ovens with a 10'-12' peel to take out the crispy piping hot bread!

Barbara pointed out **North Beach Pizza** at Grant and Union, an institution in itself...great pizza. One can even buy fresh dough for pizza preparation at home. Continuing on down the street, lo and behold, out pops the son of the founder of the unique Macchiarini Designs (Barbara got her custom made wedding ring here). The store opened in the 1930's and claims to be the longest continuously running modern art gallery/studio in the US.

Traipsing through the upper Grant Ave. shops, each specializing in unique handcrafted items, we arrived at our next venue, the kitchen/design studio of **I Dream of Cake**, at No.1351. The fabulous window display of "sculpted cakes" was beyond belief. *Modern Bride* magazine called Shin Min Li's studio "the world's first cake gallery!" The cakes are only created once commissioned (minimum one week's notice). Typically, a celebration cake costs around \$350.

Onward ho! Passing Ideale, Barbara's favorite restaurant, we stopped at The Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi (once a parish, now a shrine). We were lucky to meet Molly McGettigan Arthur, the Renaissance Project Director of the Shrine (www.shrinesf.org/renaissance). She came out to tell us about the proposed Umbrian style piazza that would occupy the street between the shrine and Caffè Trieste where Papa Gianni introduced San Francisco to espresso in 1956.

We crossed the street, walking past Molinari's Delicatessen, past Cinque Terre, a hidden treasure serving great food and rarely ever full, to arrive at the 1911 **Victoria's Pastry Shop** (Vallejo and Stockton), where we sat down to *pignoli* (pine nut candy) and coffee. The shop is named after the previous owner's daughter. They make their own *torrone* (confection with chocolate and hazelnut) year round and, of course, their signature cake, "St. Honore" (patron saint of bakers).

We retraced our steps back to Columbus Ave., passing Little City Butcher known for homemade sausages, to get to our next stop **Stella Pastries**. Their patented *Sacrapantina* (exclamation like "sacre bleu") is their specialty, a rum based sponge cake with custard, wine, and whipped cream. Co-owner Sylvia served up generous portions of this wonder. They are also known for the best *canoli* in North Beach.

Danilo's family-run bakery at 516 Green Street was our next venue. The present owner Walter is from Lucca and continues the proud tradition of baking his signature almond cakes as well as fresh breads on-site. Also available are sandwiches, select food items, drinks, meat and cheeses.

Last of all, but not least, **La Boulange**, opened in 2006, serving coffee, French cakes and pastries, breads, quiches, etc., offered us an assortment of items to taste.

Needless to say, we had a belly full of food and a heart full of experiences!

Thanks to Signora Dimas.

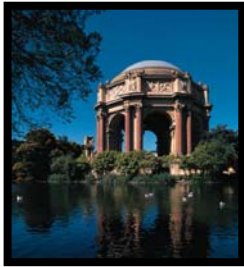
JUST THE FACTS!

By Jason Cohen

In our last issue we published three questions on subjects that have potential for confusion or misinformation. Here are the questions, and the answers we have found (with sources cited):

(1) Is today's Palace of Fine Arts the original 1915 building? What, if anything, happened to it in the 1960s?

According to the booklet *Palace of Fine Arts: A Brief History*, which is sold at the Exploratorium, the original 1915 building was made of wood and staff (a mixture of plaster and



burlap-type fiber) and was crumbling by the 1930s. Many people (including its architect Bernard Maybeck) thought it should be allowed to crumble to the ground, thus

completing his design concept of ruins. However, that vision changed, and between 1964 and 1966 the original structure was completely torn down and the present concrete and steel structure built. It is a mostly accurate re-creation of the original, but is only 40 years old. The only remnant of the 1915 original is the steel frame of the building that today houses the Exploratorium.

(2) What was canned at the Cannery at Fisherman's Wharf?

This question was submitted because a bus driver said he has heard guides state that sardines were canned here. However, according to www.delmontesquare.com, "originally built in 1907, the Cannery was once the largest peach cannery in the world." Also, "[b]y 1909, it was the largest fruit and vegetable cannery in the world with a capacity of 200,000 hand-soldered cans per day and employing 2,500 people."

(3) What is meant by the statement that due to space limitations burials in the Presidio Cemetery are vertical? Were people buried standing up?

According to Bob Bowen, author of the Arcadia book *San Francisco's Presidio*, "for many years family graves were placed side by side, then because of space limitations the second casket was placed on top of the one already in place." In a sense this could be described as vertical burials, and may have led to a belief that people were buried standing up.

Here are three new questions



(1) Do they (did they) really wash coins at the St. Francis ("legal money laundering") to keep women's white gloves from getting dirty, or is this a myth?

(2) Which house on Postcard Row is the "Full House" house?



(3) Is it true that the Golden Gate Bridge is painted every seven years and it takes seven years to paint, so there is a person who simply starts at one end and paints all the way across, then starts over?

If you think you have the answer (or a good story), please write to Jason at jcohen1@pacbell.net.

Look for Robert Schally's article "Backroads to the Delta" on the website.

SAN FRANCISCO'S SOUTH EAST NEIGHBORHOODS

By Donna West-Piezzi

On June 27, 2006, San Francisco's unique south east neighborhoods became known to a large group of tour guides and friends. Jean Feilmoser's lively commentary on the history of the Farmer's Market, Portola, Visitacion Valley, Ingleside, Little Hollywood, Cayuga, New Mission Terrace, McLaren Park and the Norcal Waste Treatment facility informed and entertained us.

The day began with a look at the site of the oldest farmer's market in the area, in continuous operation since 1944. We admired the colorful murals, a recent addition to the stalls and walls painted by the Precita Eyes mural center.

Franco Mancini (President of Friends of McLaren Park) came aboard in the Portola District at San Bruno Avenue where horse drawn trolleys used to travel on tracks. With the largely Italian population in the past, greenhouses and gardens were prominent. We passed the old Garibaldi nursery with roses still growing wild out the top of broken greenhouse windows.

The sunny, but windy neighborhood now has a mix of Spanish and Asian residents. We passed a 16 square block underground reservoir holding water for one-third of the city. We admired McLaren Park, with 317 acres San Francisco's second largest. Franco leads hiking trips here regularly.

For our look at Visitacion Valley, a native resident, Edie Epps, came aboard to share her insights and memories. She related that the area was named in 1777 and later became a Mexican land grant. At one point it was possible to buy a lot for \$125 (\$1 down and \$1 a week). Today the population is a mix of Asian, Hispanic and African American.

Once the largest employer in the neighborhood, the Schlage Lock Company (locks, WWII ammo) closed its factory on Bayshore Boulevard in 1999. Driving past the deserted site, we could see why the local residents are pushing for development. While on Bayshore, we also saw the 3rd Street Light Rail Project, due to start operation in early 2007.

We stopped to explore the Norcal Waste Treatment plant, a 44-acre site where San Francisco's garbage is processed. Debra Monk explained their "Artist in Residence" program, began in 1990. We watched

trucks trundle in and out of the smelly "pit," transferring material from smaller trucks to larger ones that take the refuse to the Altamont Pass area. Seagull heaven here! We walked up to a sculpture garden filled with creative art made of plastics, metals and other recycled items.

Our path was paved with rubble from the Loma Prieta earthquake. We admired wonderful examples of the art made by previous artists. Glass platters made from shattered Muni shelters are for sale. We met the current artist in residence, Kim Weller, who is paid a stipend for four months, given studio space and unlimited access to the "dump."



After passing more local landmarks, we enjoyed Italian family-style cooking at the Granada Cafe. During lunch, Cristie Johnston from ENCORE described the work of this neighborhood revitalization group.

Afterwards we met Bonnie Sherk of Living Libraries. She explained her garden project as a "Think Park" for students and local residents. Islais Creek, still flowing under a nearby playground, provides the natural water source for the garden.

We drove into the Ingleside neighborhood onto the Entrada loop to admire a 28-foot sundial built in 1913. Our intrepid Coach 21 driver, Kouch, had to back out of the loop because of a parked car. All of us were impressed with his driving skill!

Our stop at Brooks Park gave us stunning views from the top of the city's southernmost hill towards Lake Merced and the Pacific. Peter Vaernet, one of this community park's dedicated volunteer caretakers, proudly showed us his group's accomplishments.

Outside the old Geneva Car Barn (home of the historic streetcars when not on duty), we met Dan Weaver, in charge of restoring this city landmark still bearing 1906 scars.

As the culmination of a highly educational and entertaining day, we had a drink at the pub in the Glen Eagles golf course, where we were met by none other than the Emperor (Norton) himself.

Thank you, Jean, for your organizational genius.

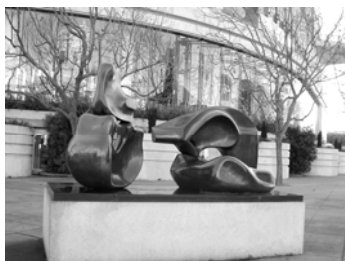
You can find Donna's complete article on the website, including links to useful websites.

CIVIC CENTER - PERFORMING ARTS BUILDINGS AND CITY HALL

By Ulla Kaprielian

Our docent-led tour started at *Davies Symphony Hall*, opened in September 1980 after more than two years of construction. The city donated the land and the State and Federal Governments gave \$10 million. It took money from more than six thousand individuals, foundations and corporations to finish this \$28 million project. The largest contributor was Louise M. Davies with a gift of \$4 million. The architectural firm Skidmore Owings & Merrill created the beautiful building, however, the acoustics inside were sorely lacking. A \$10 million renovation project in 1992 fixed the problem. There are now plastic reflecting panels over the stage and fabric banners along the side walls, all computer adjustable. Even the seat backs are adjusted for sound quality. The Ruffatti Brothers organ with 10,000 pipes thankfully did not need additional work.

There are a number of art pieces around the building, such as Henry Moore's "Reclining Female"



sculpture at the corner of Van Ness and Grove. Sydney Garden's sculpture "Untitled" stands on the balcony facing Van Ness and Hayes and Fletcher Benton's "Balanced and Unbalanced T" is at the entrance facing Franklin Street.

Before we entered the opera house, we heard about the *San Francisco Ballet Company*. Founded in 1932, it is the oldest classical ballet company in the US. The first complete *Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake* ballets were performed here in San Francisco under the direction of William Christenson! The Ballet Association building on 455 Franklin Street dates to 1983 and was the first building especially designed for dance. It houses a ballet school and rehearsal halls. Performances in the Opera House require a special floor on the stage to muffle the sound of the dancers.

The *War Memorial Opera House*, our next stop, was opened in 1932. Designed by Arthur Brown, Jr. and Albert Lansburgh, it is classical French architecture but purely American material and workmanship. With close to 3200 seats it is the third largest opera house in the world. The acoustics are great and there are no columns to obscure the view.

Staging is so intricate that it needs to be carefully rehearsed. Sets for the entire season are stored in the "Patch," a '70s addition to enlarge stage and storage space.

After the 1989 earthquake, the building was closed for 18 months for seismic retrofitting as well as major maintenance and cleaning. The curtain was replaced at a cost of \$250,000 and is a replica of the original, weighing 3000 lbs. There are now TV monitors at the height of the dress circle to enable the singers to watch the conductor at all times while facing the audience. The fabulous ceiling light fixture is 25' wide, cast in aluminum, art deco style. It takes 1000 plus bulbs to make it shine.

Most of us did not know that the space between the Opera House and Veterans Building is called "*Court of Memories*," designed by Thomas Church. It contains soil from all battle fields where US soldiers have died, dating back to WWI.

Our last stop before touring City Hall was the *Veterans Building*, also the work of Arthur Brown Jr. and Albert Lansburgh. It serves to provide space for veterans organizations, PALM (Performing Arts Library and Museum), and the Herbst Theater, a small recital hall. In 1945 the United Nations Charter was signed here after being created in the opera house. Along the walls of the theater we admired murals, depicting the four elements – water, earth, fire and wind. They are the works of Frank Brangwyn. He painted them for the Pan Pacific Exposition.



If you missed this program, you can take one of the public tours of the Performing Arts Buildings on any Monday from 10 until 2 on the hour; cost \$5, seniors \$3.

Photo: by U. Kaprielian

[Civic Center. cont'd page 7](#)

Civic Center, cont'd from page 6

City Hall was the last stop of our Civic Center tour. Al Lopez, SFTGG member and City Hall guide, was kind enough to share his expertise with us. We started at the original front entrance on Van Ness Avenue. Before we took the time to admire the great rotunda, we entered the anteroom of the mayor's office. Unfortunately, Mayor Newsom was busy preparing his state of the city speech. We would have been happy to listen to him, but it was not to be. Instead, we viewed pictures of the alcaldes and mayors, all 53 of them. Washington Bartlett, the first American alcalde, made the name change from Yerba Buena to San Francisco official on January 30, 1847. John W. Geary was the last American alcalde, and San Francisco's first American mayor. Adolph Sutro was number twenty-four.

Next we visited the Board of Supervisors' Chamber. The walls are made of Manchurian oak. There are no oak forests left in Manchuria which makes these walls priceless. The plaster ceiling with magnificent details is made to look like wood. The whole room is extremely impressive. As required by law, the building is wheelchair accessible, a necessity for supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier and others.

Once in the rotunda, Al mentioned that this building, designed by Bakewell and Brown, was opened during the tenure of Mayor James Rolph, Jr., also known as Sunny Jim Rolph. The building is one of the finest examples of Beaux Arts style architecture. With a height of 307' outside and 183' inside, it is the fifth tallest dome in the world after St. Peter in Rome, El Duomo in Florence, St. Paul in London, and Hotel des Invalides (Napoleon's Tomb) in Paris. The floor with its intricate design is made of pink Tennessee marble from Georgia.

City Hall is filled with mythological symbols. The gods Saturn, Bacchus, Ceres and others are watching over the city.

In case you did not know: San Francisco's motto is Oro en Paz, Fierro en Guerra (gold in peace, iron in war) and the city's flower is the dahlia.

Free public tours of City Hall are available Monday – Friday at 10 am, noon and 2 pm. They last 45-60 minutes.

Thank you Susan Guerguy for arranging this tour for us. The information will certainly enhance our city tour commentary.

Japantown, cont'd from page 1

internment centers scarcely habitable by farm animals, where, spruced up by residents themselves, they dwelt until the end of WWII.

Despite all the hardship, there is much to be proud of during that period. The war witnessed dedicated Japanese American teams of military interpreters working feverishly at the Presidio. The Japanese American 2nd Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team was the most decorated combat team in the war. In 1963, Texas Governor Conally made them honorary Texans for rescuing Texas' own "Lost Battalion." They had done so in 1944 at great personal cost in Bruyeres, France, where a memorial is held each year in their memory.

Japanese Americans, upon returning from "relocation", found their property now in the hand of others, mostly African Americans, who had come to the Bay Area during the war effort. Somehow these displaced and often discouraged people found the strength to begin again and demonstrate clearly that there is indeed a reason to live in this land. Inconceivably, many of these people had to suffer a second dislocation during the 1960s when the area was chosen by the Federal Government for redevelopment.

The Miyako Hotel and Miyako Inn, together with the Kintetsu Buildings (with bridge across Webster St.), including the Kabuki Theater and the Peace Pagoda, form the core of today's Japantown. The Kabuki Theater, now a multiplex movie palace, in years gone by was the site of Noh, Kabuki and contemporary stage performances.

Come one, come all! Irrashimase! Welcome!

Gaman (patience) – **Gamansuru** (to be patient, to endure): To have patience, to endure, to put up with something (tolerate).

Check out the following exhibits:

"The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from Japanese American Internment camps 1942-1946"
Craft and Folk Art Museum (www.mocfa.org) on Yerba Buena Lane (Marriott Hotel), through February 25, 2007

"The Sculptures of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air"
at the deYoung Museum through January 28, 2007

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THE GUIDEPOST EDITORS ARE WISHING ALL OF YOU
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
AND A HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL 2007

Ulla Kaprielian, Renate Coombs, Jason Cohen

Upcoming programs will be listed on the website. If you don't have access to a computer, call
the Program chairperson

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