



THE GUIDIEPOST

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SAN FRANCISCO WALKING TOUR

Review by Michael Crowe

After an informative briefing at San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau, our group split into two, and I set off up the escalator to the Powell Street Cable Car Turnaround. Rick Spear began his tour with the story of Andrew Hallidie, the inventor of the cable car, whose father had invented “wire rope.” The inspiration for his invention happened after Hallidie witnessed a horse shot to death after breaking a leg dragging a buggy up Nob Hill. The first cable car operator, being too frightened to actually ride the new contraption down the steep hills of San Francisco, forced Hallidie to ride the first cable car himself. If he could build it, he could operate it.

I came to a halt in Union Square, and was told of the significance of the *Victory* statue of a beautiful woman holding a trident atop the Dewey Monument. The dishwasher and occasional artist's model who inspired her was the young Alma de Bretteville (later Spreckels). She was a beautiful American woman who claimed to be descended from French aristocracy whose family had long since lost whatever fortune they had once owned. Alma dreamed of regaining that fortune, and her wish was granted at the unveiling of the monument, when she was noticed by the wealthy sugar magnate, Adolph Spreckels. They married and resided together in the Spreckels Mansion, but Alma was never fully accepted by the city's elite. Perhaps this was due to her passion for swimming nude in her gigantic swimming pool, which she did until well into her eighties.

We strolled down Maiden Lane to Grant Street and up to the Chinatown Gate. Maiden Lane was not named after the “ladies of the evening” who used to work there, but after the trendy shopping street in London. Originally named Morton Street, it was understood that women never walked down the street unless they were “professionals.” Occasionally, an innocent Victorian lady who did not know better would make that mistake, and be quite surprised to see topless women selling their “wares” out of the windows.

The Xanadu Gallery on Maiden Lane is the only building in the city designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Although many believe that the circular staircase inside was the inspiration for Wright's Guggenheim Museum in New York, the architectural plans for the Guggenheim were drawn up long before the Xanadu was built.

I dodged left along Grant Street, the oldest street in San Francisco. There are many different translations of what the famous Chinatown Gate means, but most are some variation of “All is good that lies under Heaven.” Daniel Bacon has created several plaques commemorating the Barbary Coast Trail, each one honoring a different donor who helped fund the project. I am proud to announce that the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild is honored on the plaque outside the Chinatown Gate.

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Message from Don DeLaura

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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 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.

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At last we have a Guidepost for 2010. In recent months, a number of guides submitted articles that I think you will enjoy. Much of this activity was spurred by the remarkably imaginative programs developed by Anita Rao.

Be honest. When you first heard about a city tour based on public transportation, didn't you scratch your head? It turns out that this may have been the most popular program ever. Rick Spear and Anita led nearly 60 Guild members around the city by way of many public vehicles. In our lead article, Michael Crowe captures this experience in a most entertaining way.

Three of the articles are program reviews by a member who only joined the Guild this year – Richard Edgar. Richard writes from a clear and personal perspective. Though he has been a tour guide for many years, he approaches new experiences with the enthusiasm of a novice.

One of our talented reviewers, Fran Perry, is back with an article about Michele McCurry's Sacramento tour last November. Fran's piece is so faithful to our experience that it could be used as a blueprint for a tour of our state Capitol.

Finally, we have the first part of a mini-bio of John C. Fremont by Jason Cohen. Jason has contributed to every issue of the Guidepost since 2005. We hope his involvement continues. Thank you, Jason, for this long commitment to the Guild.

I also want to thank our Photo Editor, David Orr, for his help. He assembled the database from which the photos in this issue were chosen. All of the pictures were taken by David.

The obvious question now is: What is the future of the Guidepost? I can't answer this completely yet. Since the Guild began in 1984, education and communication have been fundamental to our purpose. The Board of Trustees will be considering how we communicate with each other and with the outside world. Among the topics will be the Guild website, Yahoogroups, MyTourGuide.com, and the Guidepost.

I can assure you that the kind of information that has appeared in the Guidepost all of these years will be "published" on a regular, and probably more frequent, schedule. Until the new study group makes its recommendations, I will remain the contact for the Guidepost. If you have articles, or ideas for articles, please send them to me. If no changes are recommended early in the year, the next issue of the Guidepost will be published in mid-March, 2011. Deadline for submissions will be February 21, 2011.

Respectfully,

Don DeLaura
ddelaura1@earthlink.net

While it is hard to answer just how many Chinese people live in Chinatown, it is easier to answer that San Francisco's population is roughly one-third Asian. And while San Francisco's Chinatown Chinese population is no longer the largest outside of China, the physical space that is our city's Chinatown is considered the largest Chinatown in the world.

I loafed along past Old St. Mary's Cathedral, which has a fascinating photographic display of the '06 earthquake. The original Barbary Coast was just down California Street, which compelled the Church to inscribe under the clock, "Son, observe the time and fly from evil." I peered down narrow Commercial Street at the unobstructed view straight to the Ferry Building. Commercial was one of the original docks later converted into a paved street, once the Financial District was filled in with rubble left over from the '06 earthquake.

Portsmouth Square has been dubbed "Chinatown's Living Room." I admired the low-angle view of our tallest building, the Transamerica Pyramid. Many do not know the story of the "Monkey Block," the building that originally stood on that spot. It was the first high-rise to be built in San Francisco, and home to many bohemians and writers. Here we come to the tale of one journalist who often lunched there with his firefighter friend. The two swapped stories about the city, and years later the journalist left San Francisco and became a well-respected writer. But the budding writer never forgot his friend, and he used his name as the title for one of his books. For the curious, the name of the author was Mark Twain. The name of the friend was Tom Sawyer.

Another literary figure that liked the locals was Robert Louis Stevenson. The local Chinese liked him as well, so much so that they left a statue of him in Portsmouth Square. Stevenson would plop himself down on one of the benches in the Square and write, listen to the stories of the local Chinese and sailors who passed through, and glean material for his adventure novels, "Kidnapped" and "Treasure Island." His own story had a romantic ending, too, when he fell in love with the San Francisco socialite Fanny Alexander.

I dragged my feet down Clay Street to the Pony Express plaque. I had always wondered why the Pony Express did not go all the way to San Francisco in later years, and I found out why: The invention of the telegraph. Rick told a story that helped illustrate how revolutionary the telegraph was. Mexico became independent from Spain in 1821, but California was still considered part of Spain until 1822. If that strikes you as more than a bit odd, consider that in those pre-internet days news did not travel very fast up the Pacific Coast. News came by horseback, so it took a full year for Californians to realize they were no longer part of Spain. The invention of the telegraph changed all that.

Nearby stands the original building of the Bank of Italy, now the Bank of America. Small by today's standards, it is nonetheless a magnificent edifice with a beautiful interior I passed the Wells Fargo Bank on Montgomery, and could spy their museum and stagecoach through the windows. The tiny stagecoaches used to hold twenty people. And I thought MUNI was crowded!

I leapt onto the cable car at California Street and slid off on top of Nob Hill. The Silver Kings and Railroad Barons made the area what it is today. Their names remain in Huntington Park, the Fairmount, the Mark Hopkins, and the Stanford Court. Where Crocker's two mansions once stood, we now have Grace Cathedral. James Flood's mansion was the only building left standing after the quake of 1906. The only reason the building, now the Pacific Union Club, did not burn is that it was *not* made of wood.

I walked down Mason, past the apartment complex used in the Alfred Hitchcock classic, "Vertigo." Treasure Island was visible in the distance. The only building left standing from the Golden Gate Exposition is a tall semi-circular building that was used briefly as an airport for Clippers that would go island hopping through Asia in the early days of air travel. It was later used as a mock-up of the Berlin Airport in the film "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

The streets became steeper. Although Filbert Street is cited as the steepest street in San Francisco, parts of 22nd St. are just as steep. Telegraph Hill loomed ahead of us. Old-timers will tell you that as Telegraph Hill was mined for ballast for ships, houses—even entire streets—disappeared. People came home from a hard day's work, only to realize their home no longer existed. Homes were either blown up with dynamite or simply fell down as the hill slowly crumbled away. Sansome Street was originally halfway up the hill. After years of mining, the street is at sea level.

I hijacked a Powell-Hyde cable car to Lombard Street, often called the "crookedest street in world," which is technically incorrect on two counts: 1) It is not even the most crooked street in San Francisco, let alone the world, and 2) "Crookedest" isn't even a real word (but let's not pick that nit). Cont'd on Page 4

I walked down Lombard Street and entered the San Francisco Art Institute. There I viewed one of only three Diego Rivera Murals in all of San Francisco. The other two are located at City College and The City Club, and are much harder for the public to see. The mural stands inside a room that doubles as an art gallery of student's work. Many people mistakenly think that the red metal girders on the right upper left of the mural must be Diego's depiction of the workers building the Golden Gate Bridge. We forget that International orange is a very common color in engineering and construction. It is the color most often used as paint primer.

I tailed the group down Columbus, hopped the 30, and snuck off at the Palace of Fine Arts. Rick mentioned that the intersection of Scott and Chestnut was the original entrance to the Pan-Pacific Exposition. They say that the rubble left over from the 1906 quake was used as fill for the Exposition and present Marina district, but it is highly unlikely that huge piles of rubble sat idle between the years of 1906 and 1915. The more logical explanation is that mud and sand were dredged from the bay to create the area that now houses the Palace of Fine Arts.

Sad to say, the Palace is the only building left from that era. Even the Palace is truly only a replica of the original, designed by Bernard Maybeck, one of California's most famous architects. Made of plaster-of-Paris, it was renovated in the 1960's with poured concrete. What had been designed to look like a modern "ruin," a physical ode to fading beauty, had become a ruin itself. Originally, water trickled out of the eyes of the maidens, who had their backs turned away from us, crying for the end of "classical beauty." Their "tears" watered shrubbery on top of the arches and balustrades.

Although George Lucas owns the buildings across the street, he does not own the land. Instead, he has a ninety-nine year lease. This federal land is owned partly by the National Park Service, partly by the Presidio Trust. George pays a whopping thirteen million dollars a year, which makes only a dent in the thirty-six million dollars it takes to keep the Presidio open. The Presidio Trust does not charge a toll, yet the Presidio became self-sufficient in 2006, well ahead of the original deadline of 2013.

I stowed away on a 28 to the Golden Gate Bridge, then down 19th Ave. to Golden Gate Park. The Panhandle was to go all the way from its present location to The Embarcadero. This meant Golden Gate Park would have literally bisected San Francisco. The wealthy de Young and Spreckels families were quite competitive, which was to the benefit of San Francisco's art lovers. The de Young's bequeathed money for the de Young Museum, and Alma Spreckels provided the funds for the Legion of Honor.

I spied many hidden gardens within Golden Gate Park, as well as the not-so-hidden Botanical Gardens, which contain plants from all over the globe. The nearby San Francisco Exhibition House was once the home of the San Francisco County Fair. The tiny Shakespeare Garden contains the plants, trees, and shrubbery mentioned in the works of the Bard.

Anita Rao schlepped us through the rose garden toward the Japanese Tea Garden, which during the summer months has a free hour from 9 to 10 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Naturally, no religious shrines or temples are allowed on city grounds, which are public land . . . except for the Shinto temples in the Japanese Tea Garden. The most likely explanation for this is that our city fathers had no idea that Shinto was a religion. Faced with a possible public controversy, the city fathers came up with a political solution. It is still in use today: They let it slide.

[Editor's Note: For more info on the mysterious ways of San Francisco politics and City Hall in particular, please see Mike's separate article on the City Hall portion of the walking tour of San Francisco.]

Program Coordinator: Anita Rao
Guides: Rick Spear, Anita Rao

JOHN CHARLES FREMONT - Part 1

By Jason Cohen

Arguably one of the most controversial figures in American history, John Charles Fremont is of special interest to San Francisco tour guides because of his role in the American takeover of California in 1846. His legacy includes having been the first Republican presidential candidate, and having more than 100 places named after him, including counties in Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, and Wyoming, and of course Fremont Street in San Francisco and the city of Fremont. There are also many plants such as the Fremont cottonwood tree, Fremont goosefoot, and Fremont thorn bush. He also gave names to many places in the West, such as the Great Basin, the Golden Gate, and the Carson and Humboldt rivers.

Fremont was born in Georgia in 1813, illegitimate son of a French or French-Canadian father and a mother from an affluent Virginia family. His father died when he was very young, but a Charleston lawyer took an interest in him and paid for his education. Another father figure was Joel Poinsett, a future Secretary of War (and the person after whom the poinsettia is named). In 1838 Poinsett secured a presidential appointment for Fremont as an officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. The fact that Fremont was politically appointed, rather than being a West Point graduate, contributed to a lifetime of tension between him and other officers.

The Topographical Engineer's role was to help set the country's borders and chart trails and future railroad routes. In 1838-39 Fremont assisted the eminent cartographer Jean Nicollet in an expedition to the upper Mississippi River, from which they produced a map that won widespread praise for its scientific validity.

Poinsett introduced Fremont to his future father-in-law, the powerful Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton (great-uncle of the painter of the same name). Benton was a leading proponent of Manifest Destiny, the idea that the United States was destined to expand across the continent to the Pacific Ocean.

John Charles met the senator's daughter, Jessie, in 1841, but his family background did not make him a "proper" suitor to her, so, without the approval of her parents, the couple eloped. The Bentons then grudgingly accepted him into the family.

First and Second Expeditions

Fremont's early career consisted of leading three expeditions to explore the west. Critics claim he didn't discover much that was new, since fur trappers and other explorers had already been through the same areas. However, the expeditions yielded weather and geological observations, accurate maps, descriptions of the Native Americans, and collections of botanical and mineral specimens that paved the way for the settlers who were soon to come.

After each expedition, Jessie improved John Charles' trip reports, making them adventure stories, with her husband as the hero. The reports became national best sellers, which generated interest in westward expansion and made John Charles a celebrity. (With her many skills and political connections, it is interesting to speculate that if Jessie Benton Fremont were alive today she might be elected or appointed to public office.)

Senator Benton secured government funding for Fremont's First Expedition, May-October 1842, which began in St. Louis and traveled up the Missouri River to the Platte, and then to Fort Laramie, Wyoming and on to South Pass (the lowest elevation crossing of the Rockies) and the Wind River Range. The expedition included the famous western scouts Kit Carson and Jim Bridger. Carson would accompany Fremont on the subsequent expeditions as well. Although John Charles would spend most of his life in the refined drawing rooms of Victorian cities, it was the hardships of wilderness travel and the camaraderie of his men that seemed to provide the greatest pleasures.

The Second Expedition (1843-1844) again crossed South Pass and went to the Great Salt Lake. Earlier explorers had thought the lake was an arm of the ocean, but Fremont determined it was not, and named the area the Great Basin, since precipitation that falls there never flows to the sea. Fremont's description of the area was inspirational to Brigham Young, who would lead the Mormons to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

The expedition then followed the Columbia River into Oregon, turned southward, and entered California in the northeast near Klamath Lake. They traveled south along the eastern face of the Sierra Nevada (today's Highway 395). Near Reno, with the January weather deteriorating and supplies almost exhausted, Fremont made the dangerous decision to cross westward to Sutter's Fort (Sacramento). As the Donner Party would learn just three years later, winter crossings of the Sierra Nevada are not a good idea! The rationale was that they were only a short 70 miles from Sutter's Fort, yet traveling those 70 miles took them five weeks! Cont'd on page 6

JOHN CHARLES FREMONT – Part 1, Cont'd from page 5

Strangely, for a supposed mapmaking expedition, Fremont had brought a small cannon along. Before he left St. Louis, his superior officer learned of the cannon, and ordered Fremont to return to Washington to explain. Jessie Fremont received the message from Washington only hours after her husband had departed St. Louis to head west. Rather than forwarding the letter, she sent one of her own, urging her husband to quickly continue on the journey!

Eventually, in the Sierra, when they were about to die of cold and starvation (for example, they had to eat their pet dog), they had no choice but to abandon the cannon, after having dragged it for two thousand miles! (A cannon now on display at the Nevada State Museum in Carson City is said to be Fremont's.)

On Valentine's Day 1844 John Charles climbed a mountain peak to look around and became the first Euro-American to view Lake Tahoe. Finally, on March 8, the group arrived at Sutter's Fort, bedraggled, but safe. After resting, they exited California by traveling south through the Central Valley and east through the Mojave Desert. This was a U.S. Army expedition squarely in Mexican California, but since the Mexican settlements were only along the coast, the issue would not come up – yet.

Next issue: The conquest of California, court marshal, and gold.

Source: This article is primarily based on *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny*, Andrew Rolle, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

MUIR WOODS – MARIN TOUR

Review by Richard Edgar

As a new member of the guild, the tour of Muir Woods and the Marine Mammal Center was my second (first full day), and I must say I was very impressed, as everyone else seemed to be as well.

When we arrived at the park we were met by Mia Monroe, National Park Service Ranger, and Christopher Dunnier, of the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, who runs the Visitor Center, which houses the ticket office and bookstore. Christopher offered good practical advice to start off a tour:

- Give out tickets, brochures, etc., before getting off the bus.
- Or, if you need to get that material from his office, step away from the window to give it out in order not to clog up the entrance.
- Wait for stragglers so they don't have to go looking for you in order to get their tickets.
- For conservation purposes, ask guests to take only as many brochures as they need.

I've done hundreds of tours to the park over the years but I couldn't figure out why they closed the parking lot at the entrance a few years ago. Mia explained that they want people to enjoy the peace and beauty of the park as they approached it from the bus entrance to enhance their experience in the park. She also noted that we can download all the materials about the park from their website: <nps.gov/muwo>.

Then we started our tour of William Kent's \$45,000 gift to the nation, which celebrated its one hundredth anniversary in 2008. Mia told us how Mr. Kent donated the land to keep it from being flooded by a local water company to turn it into a reservoir, and how President Theodore Roosevelt made it a National Monument in 1908 to protect it and save it for future generations to enjoy. Her passion for her job was evident to all of us and made the experience special. She also explained that the new raised wooden path was added because the old paved path was hurting the roots of the trees and was not allowing moisture to get to the soil below.

The tour took about an hour and all of us, even those who have done many tours to the woods, learned a great deal.

Before we left Mia introduced us to Deborah Duck, who runs the cafeteria and store at the park. She told us that guides get a 50% discount in the cafeteria and a 25% discount in the store with a SFTGG ID. Her email address is: deborah@muirwoodstradingcompany.com. Like the rest of the park, the store and cafeteria are carrying more environmentally friendly products and adopting new conservation practices. Cont'd on page 7

MUIR WOODS – MARIN TOUR, Cont'd from page 6

After our tour of the woods it was time for lunch. We went up to the Muir Beach Overlook to enjoy a box lunch and meet new friends. It was great to get to know some of the other guides and share stories with them. And the view! Even though it was partially foggy, the view of the coastline was spectacular. All in all, a great "restaurant."

Next it was on to the Marine Mammal Center, the largest of its kind in the world. It was my first time there. They have saved 15,000 mammals since they opened in 1975. They save about 600 mammals a year but last year they saved 1700 mammals, mostly seals, sea lions, elephant seals, and sea otters. These mammals can take several months to a year to heal. When they are released back into the wild, they are tagged so that if they are hurt again the hospital can look up their records.

I was fascinated to learn that sea lions have ear flaps similar to ours while seals have ear holes, and that harbor seals are light colored with white spots. Otters have fur. Elephant seals have big noses and adult males can grow to 4500 pounds and 15 feet in length. Can you believe that blue whales, the largest mammals on earth, have hearts the size of a car and tongues that weigh as much as an elephant?

On the other hand, although it is against the law to injure a mammal, the center treats 15 to 20 mammals year with gunshot wounds. I was also very surprised to learn that the center rescues mammals along 600 miles of the California coast. If the mammal is too big to bring back to the center, they will treat it where it rests. I also learned that they do autopsies on the ones they can't save to learn how to save others with the same symptoms.

The Marine Mammal Center offers classes on mammals as well as private and self-guided tours. Both types of tours are very popular, so they advise that you make reservations several weeks in advance for the self-guided tours and two months in advance for private tours. To make reservations contact Dede Sabbag at (415) 289-7330 or sabbagd@tmmc.org. Their website is www.MarineMammalCenter.org.

I found both tours to be extremely informative and great fun. And being able to share the experience with other tour guides made it that much more enjoyable. I have already signed up for other tours and can't wait to share more information and stories with my fellow Guild members.

Tour Guide/Coordinator: Don DeLaura
Program Coordinator: Anita Rao

WINE COUNTRY TOUR

Review by Richard Edgar

It was a beautiful day in Napa valley (isn't it always?) when we pulled into the parking lot of the Seguin Moreau Cooperage, the pre-eminent barrel maker in the U.S., to start our day in the wine country. And it was evident early on that Anita had put together another amazing tour. We were met by Lynae who sat us down to watch a short tape followed by a shorter Q&A before showing us where they toast the barrels (a process called "bousinage"). The toasting allows the wineries to add some subtle shading, like nuts or fruit, to the taste of the wine. There are several toasting available, which you can look up on their website, each of which gives a different flavor to the wine.

The barrels are hooped at the top and left open at the bottom so that they can be placed over a fire below the floor. It is a wood fire made from the same oak as the barrels. Then the thicker, heavier hoops used for the toasting are replaced by thinner galvanized hoops that are usually painted black. The barrels are then given a coat of linseed oil, and sometimes varnish, before being shipped out.

Seguin Moreau started in 1870 as Seguin Cooperage. Remy Martin, the cognac house, became their sole stockholder in 1958 and bought Moreau Cooperage that year to create Seguin Moreau. Their head coopers are trained in France (and Scotland), and they then teach the local coopers. They use the finest American, Eastern European, Russian and French oak in their barrels. Their American oak is grown mostly in Missouri, but also in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. Their seasoning yards are in Merpins, France, and Perryville, Missouri. Overall Seguin Moreau is the leading supplier of French Haute Futaie (fully grown timber) barrels in the world. They also invented the U-Staff process which puts small grooves in the staves which increase the wood to wine contact by 100% and increases the aromatic complexity of the wine. Cont'd on page 8

WINE COUNTRY TOUR, Cont'd from page 7

From there we walked about a block away to Bin To Bottle, a custom crush facility. They are a winery, but they don't grow the grapes or sell the wine. And they do not have their own label. They take care of the entire winemaking process from the crushing of the grapes to the bottling of the wine for their clients, which number about forty.

As one would expect, Seguin Moreau follows the procedures that their clients set down. They have a couple of special (and very costly) machines that other winemakers do not have which can take out certain impurities that sometimes show up in the wine. John Wilkinson, the managing partner who also built Campton Place Hotel in San Francisco and uses the same First Class customer service he used there, showed us around. He racks his wines (cleaning out the barrels of sediment, etc.) every six months. He is also building a tasting room in Napa for his clients to use for their customers.

Both Seguin Moreau and Bin To Bottle are private companies so you cannot bring tour groups to either one. Please do not call them for a tour. They made an exception for us since we are tour guides, and this can help us on our wine tours. But John does have another company that can give tours for groups and you can contact him for more information on that company at john@bintobottle.com.

Our guides for the day were Maureen Grinnell and Brian Beer, local Napa Valley guides who are also members of the SFTGG. They provided wonderful "insider" commentary as we drove between venues. The next stop was a few miles down the Silverado Trail at Signorello Winery where we had a "picnic" lunch at the tables on their beautiful back patio. The lunch was accompanied by a tasting of several Signorello wines. Next we had a short tour of their vineyard (our schedule was tight, with a lot to see).

Ray Signorello, Sr., and his wife retired to Napa valley and bought their 100-acre estate in 1977. In 1980 they planted vines, and in 1985 started to sell the grapes to local wineries. The next year they started their own winery and have been going strong ever since, producing 6,000 cases a year. They also do special events like Italian pizza Sundays as well as private dinners. More than ten years ago they started the Snake River Farms, and imported cattle from Japan to produce their own Kobe Beef. You can contact Kathy Wood at kathy@signorellovineyards.com for more information.

Our last stop was about a half mile down the Silverado Trail at the Regusci (re-GOO-shee) Winery. Like Signorello, Regusci produces 6,000 cases a year. It was erected in 1878 by J. P. White from thick lava stones made from the surrounding valley floor. The original owner was Terrill L. Grigsby, whose family had to sell to Gaetano Regusci in 1932 due to the economic downturn caused by Prohibition. Gaetano cashed in his insurance policy and purchased the entire 286-acre ranch for \$22,000, about one-tenth of what just a single acre would go for today. Times were hard so Gaetano would hunt deer in the valley, cure the venison, and sell it to the local prisons for extra income.

We learned all this from our tour guide, Neil, who kept encouraging us to "Follow me, Pigeons." He also told us they get calls from college students all the time during the crush who have extra time off school and want to make extra money. They don't last long because it is backbreaking work and quite dangerous. They use a very sharp hooked tool to cut the grape clusters from the vine and the students have gotten badly hurt so they do not hire college students anymore. Although he had his serious moments, Neil was quite the comedian and had us in stitches the entire time. You can contact him at NeilBason@RegusciWinery.com.

And then it was time to return to San Francisco and our homes, happy and richer for the experience.

Program Coordinator: Anita Rao
Tour Guides: Brian Beer, Maureen Grinnell

SACRAMENTO TOUR

Review by Fran Perry

Our hearty band of SFTGG adventurers settled into the air-conditioned, plush comfort of our deluxe motor coach headed for Sacramento. Knowledgeable guide, Michele McCurry, reminded us of "Rules of the Road for Stagecoach Travelers" who journeyed along this route in days gone by.

**Don't swear or lop over on your neighbor when sleeping.*

**Don't ask how far it is to the next station till you get there.*

**Spit on the leeward side of the coach.*

**If you have anything to bring in a bottle, pass it around.*

**If a team runs away, sit still and take your chances.*

**Don't imagine for a moment you are going on a picnic. Expect annoyances, discomfort & some hardships. If you are disappointed, thank heaven.*

As our modern "stagecoach" approached the 1st stop, Sutters Fort, Michele introduced the Swiss immigrant & ambitious dreamer, John Sutter, who in 1834, faced with business failures and enormous debt, set sail to seek his fortune in America.

He dreamed of establishing his own agricultural empire somewhere out West. By 1838, Sutter had determined that Mexican California would fulfill his ambitious dreams and he joined a trapping party headed West, a journey which took him to California by way of Fort Vancouver, the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands and Sitka, Alaska.

Finally, in August of 1839, after gaining permission to establish a settlement along the Sacramento River in an area occupied only by Indians, Sutter chartered a schooner and two smaller vessels, loaded them with provisions and his crew of Hawaiians and Mexicans, and sailed up the Sacramento River. They landed near where the American River joins the Sacramento River and were met by 200 not so friendly Indians.

Sutter's charm and diplomacy continued to serve him well and a friendship was established with the Miwoks. Some of them were employed to guard the fort.

In order to qualify for a land grant, Sutter became a Mexican citizen and received title to nearly 50,000 acres, including the land he named New Helvetia after his homeland. He could now start building his vision of Utopia.

There were large herds of cattle and horses, a 10-acre orchard, a distillery, flourmill and bakery, blacksmith, and carpenter shop for tools. A boat launch soon carried freight and passengers between Sutter's Fort and San Francisco Bay. He recruited immigrants for his settlement from the United States, Switzerland, and Germany.

Within just a few years, Sutter had achieved the grand-scale success he long dreamed of. Of course, some of this success came from the fact that he never honored the \$30,000 note promised to the Russians when he purchased Fort Ross and moved much of the equipment to his Sacramento outpost.

Sutter's Fort was pretty well completed by 1844, and it was a welcome stop as more adventurers arrived from the difficult trip West. The Fort was not only a trading post, but its strategic location made it the natural destination for parties crossing the Sierras, especially in the winter.

The ill-fated survivors of the Donner Party, when finally rescued, were put up at the Fort.

In January, 1848, a carpenter names James Marshall whom Sutter had hired to build a sawmill upstream near Coloma secretly showed Sutter what he had found at the river's bottom. Sutter consulted an encyclopedia, performed a few simple tests and said, "It's gold!" Despite pledging all his employees to secrecy, word soon reached San Francisco, and the Gold Rush was on.

Sutter's workmen quit working to look for gold. Squatters swarmed over his land, helping themselves to his land, crops, and livestock. Sutter was not interested in seeking gold and wanted to be a merchant to the miners, but his partners cheated him, and his creditors pursued him.

By 1852, New Helvetia had been devastated, and Sutter was bankrupt. He spent the rest of his life seeking compensation for his losses from the government, and died disappointed on a trip to Washington D.C. in 1880. Cont'd on page 10

SACRAMENTO TOUR, Cont'd from page 9

We've arrived at Sutter's Fort Historic Park, so back to the present...or is it back to the past? We seem to be entering a time warp of the old West.

Inside the high walls, the restored Fort is alive and bustling with activity. A roaring fire is in the outdoor beehive oven awaiting bread dough being worked in the bakery; a trapper is displaying pelts and furs and explaining how beaver hide was tanned to make the hat he is wearing. A group of young pioneer settlers is learning weaving skills, and good smells are coming from across the yard. Following the aroma to the kitchen reveals a fire in the open hearth with a big pot and a group of young pioneer clothed cooks busily chopping carrots and potatoes and one brave apprentice tearfully chopping the onions – all to go in the pot of stew for dinner.

Michele explained. This 'pioneer migration' was one of many 4th grade classes from around the State. They come to camp there overnight and experience a slice of life that was part of the foundation for the cushy life they enjoy in California today.

Lots to absorb as the past is recreated with animated displays and relics around the Fort. A favorite artifact is Patty Reed's doll, a treasure from the Donner encampment.

CALIFORNIA STATE HISTORY MUSEUM

Before turning us loose for a self-guided interior tour, Michele leads us to the museum courtyard to view the massive Constitution Wall. Sculpted into the towering 95 foot high wall are 36 words such as *common good, happiness, liberty, law*, all supportive of the empowerment offered in the State Constitution.

Other symbolism of the State Constitution as a living document, changing as the needs of the people change, becomes apparent upon further explanation and observation of how the wall also changes depending on light, time of day, weather, etc. The subdued but powerful background word, "Rights" sends the message of the importance of utilizing our rights to ensure they remain available to us.

Message to take away: the State Constitution tells us what our rights are and empowers the people to participate in government.

Much more to explore inside in the various permanent and special exhibits.

- **The California Hall of Fame**, created by the Museum and First Lady Maria Shriver, pays tribute to legendary Californians who have influenced the state, the nation, and the world. New inductees are nominated each year.
- **Artistic Legacy of California Indian Basketry**. 20 different California tribes represent some of the world's finest textiles.
- **Gold on the Bay** – Incredible historic illustrations and artifacts commemorating the 160th anniversary of the San Francisco Gold Rush.
- **Out of this World: Extraordinary Costumes from Film and TV** – Shows the importance of costumes in defining media characters. Among them, costumes from Star Trek, the Terminator, Indiana Jones, Star Wars, & more including the witch's hat from Wizard of Oz (1939).
California's Remarkable Women – an exhibit honoring recipients of the Minerva Award named for the Roman goddess who graces the California State Seal. This exhibit founded in 2004 by First Lady Maria Shriver honors California women who have stepped forward in the spirit of Minerva and changed our world with their courage, strength, and wisdom.

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

Next stop, the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento, is appropriately situated at the beginning point of the historic railroad built to connect California to the rest of the country. This incredible World Class museum displays 21 meticulously restored locomotives and rail cars dating back to 1862 and numerous exhibits illustrating how railroads have shaped people's lives, the economy, and the unique culture of California and the West.

Visitors can re-live an overnight journey in a Pullman sleeping car complete with a porter (most of them called "George") plus train motion for reality. Tour a dining car filled with elegant railroad china, and a dining car kitchen and a vintage steam engine where visitors can step aboard and talk to an engineer. Cont'd on page 11

SACRAMENTO TOUR, Cont'd from page 10

Michele led us to the impressive large-scale diorama of an 1860s construction site high in the Sierra Nevada where she colorfully recounted the trials, tribulations, and triumph of this tremendous undertaking that forever changed California and the United States. The final spike (gold!) was proudly hammered at Promontory Point in Utah in 1869, but success was not without incredible hardship, sacrifice, and amazing foresight and courage by many.

Michele recounted the story of Theodore Judah:

Theodore Judah was an industrious civil engineer from New York who turned his attention to the dream of a railroad across the country and became its most passionate and proactive advocate. He lobbied for the project in Washington, and in 1861 helped to persuade a group of merchants to incorporate and financially support the project. Four of these investors became famous (and incredibly wealthy) as the “Big Four” of politics and business in California. They were Mark Hopkins, Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford and Charles Crocker.

Judah was the visionary, and as Chief Engineer he surveyed much of the route over the challenging Sierra Nevada. He was at first a partner with the Big Four, but with their political prowess he was finessed into becoming their employee, only to have a falling out with them and being fired from the project not long after the start of track construction.

He planned to contest the action and buy out the others, but fell ill while on his way to New York to raise funds. He died in November 1863, less than a month after the locomotive *Governor Stanford* arrived in Sacramento. The *Governor Stanford* with a cowcatcher on the front is still prominently exhibited in the museum.

As a witness to history and to “history revised,” Michele pointed out the two versions of the triumphal meeting and completion of the trans-continental railroad. These portrayals are displayed side by side near the “Lost Gold Spike” near the museum exit.

One is an enlarged vintage black and white photograph of the day showing many of the actual workers on the project, including Chinese and blacks and those actually responsible for completing the amazing feat.

The “history revised” version is a huge colorful painting prominently showcasing the Big Four and their political and business cronies in fine dress and pompously taking credit for the project. The ethnic laborers who brought the project to fruition were nowhere to be seen in the painting. Theodore Judah, who had been aced out in reality, was painted into “history revised” as a face in the crowd off to the side.

VISIT TO THE STATE CAPITOL

We walked a couple of blocks to the Capitol, which allowed appreciation of the grounds and the magnificent trees representing six continents, thanks to Governor Leland Stanford. Memorials and monuments of significant events involving California are of special interest.

Michele knew her way around the Capitol like a “regular,” and she showed us a lot on our highlight tour. Several different seals are embedded at the entrance to Capitol.

Why so many different state seals? State Seals may commemorate special occasions as long as they contain the 31 stars, Eureka motto, the Bear, miners, mountains, the Bay and Roman Goddess Minerva.

The Capitol serves as a museum as well as the working seat of government. The restored historic offices are a fascinating reminder of the early days. Extension cords dangle from the ceiling fixtures to desks as electricity was only wired into the ceilings once electricity was brought in.

Legislators were on holiday, so we sat in the galleries of both chambers without having to tiptoe and be silent while Michele explained the protocol, electronic voting, the chambers décor, and the renovation, which when completed revealed the 5 original elegant vintage chandeliers that had been in storage for safekeeping, were nowhere to be found. Hmmn!

Following a look at the photo gallery of recent governors we turn to see the spectacular view out the upper doors “to nowhere” -- a perfectly aligned view of Capitol Mall, the golden Tower Bridge and the huge round, golden sun sinking in the West---indeed a fitting scenic finale to a most exceptional and informative day in our historic State Capital. Cont'd on page 12

SACRAMENTO TOUR, Cont'd from page 11

In addition to the excellent historical experience, the Sacramento Trip had other highlights and tour guide learning opportunities by observing exceptional skill, knowledge and examples of guide extraordinaire, Michele McCurry and organizer Don DeLaura.

To wit: Interesting filler and lots of ancillary info & fun along the way--

** Pop quiz on CA State –*

State flower, state bird, state marine mammal, state song (“I Love You, California”), state insect, etc. etc. She stumped us on the official state soil--

San Joaquin Valley soil FYI.

** Review of various State Capital locations.*

** Sights along the way Jelly Belly Factory, Iwo Jima statue. Budweiser and others*

** Why the town of Snivelyville became Dixon.*

** Old Sacramento – why and how the streets were raised 12’ in 1862*

The one room school in Old Town

Popular Fat City Chinese restaurant now in the former Sam Brannan store

Pony Express statue at the end of the line

Theodore Judah Memorial & more in Old Sacramento

** An optional low-key ‘wrap up’ video shown on the return trip*

** An appreciated midday box lunch organized by Don DeLaura*

** Excellent timing and flow of the diverse full day program*

SALINAS FARM TOUR

Review by Richard Edgar

The forecast was for ninety-five degree weather in Salinas valley the day of our agricultural tour, but when we got there just before noon it had only reached eighty degrees and never went above eighty-five. This was great because we were outside most of the time. Our guide for the day was Chris Bunn, a working farmer. He owns The Farm, which consists of an agricultural education center, demonstration farm, and produce stand. They give tours as well as educational classes about the valley to local schools and others. They sell their produce under the "Bunny" label, which apparently comes from Chris' grandfather. According to the story I heard, his grandfather's ears were so large they reminded everyone of a bunny. You can find out more about The Farm and schedule of tours at www.thefarm-salinasvalley.com or call 831-455-2575.

We saw crews in several of the fields harvesting produce, but unfortunately we did not have time to get up close and personal with them and their equipment. I was surprised to learn they grow more than a hundred different crops in the valley. I always thought it was much less. They harvest some of the crops 4-5 times a year and, some of the crops like strawberries and lettuce grow all year round. They do not wash their produce before shipping it to market, so it doesn't develop mildew. For the same reason they cover the strawberries while they are growing. They also water the soil before the planting to help the crops grow better. The sprinklers are sometimes laid above ground, so they can take them up before tilling; other times they are put underground, in which case they have to use a shallow tilling process. Incidentally water was first found in the valley in the mid-1800s by Klaus Spreckels whose farm was right across the street from The Farm.

Most of the workers in the valley are locals. They are paid \$8-\$12 an hour and usually work eight months out of the year, about 10 hours a day usually from 6am to 4pm. Most will not work more than ten to twenty years, since it is backbreaking work after all. The farmers provide "labor camps" (groups of small housing units) mostly for singles or small families who can't afford their own housing. And California uses a lot of workers – about one worker for every ten acres – much more than in the Great Plains states, for example..

The farmers band together and form co-ops (corporations?) to be more productive as well as more profitable. Some are organic farmers, but Chris does not believe that is the wave of the future. Since it is so expensive, he feels, organic farming cannot feed the world. It takes twice as many people to produce only sixty percent of the yield of a non-organic farm. There are also several wineries in the Salinas Valley. These wineries are located in the hills, while the farms are on the valley floor. Cont'd on page 13

SALINAS FARM TOUR, Cont'd from page 12

After about an hour we got to Chris' farm where he and his lovely wife provided quite a feast which included two kinds of pie (I, of course, tried both. Delicious!) for dessert along with ice cream, naturally. When were done with lunch Chris drove us around The Farm on a hayride, pulling the hay in an open trailer with his tractor. A lot of fun.

After we left Chris we went into downtown Salinas to visit the John Steinbeck Museum. I had been there before, and I highly recommend it to anyone even slightly interested in Steinbeck. It's terrific. And, as it turns out, it also has an agricultural museum, which is just as impressive. During our self-guided tour we learned that the Salinas Valley is known as the "Valley Of The World," and that it is quite versatile since it has both lush and arid conditions.

Large scale farming in the valley started in the 1870s, and there was a large dairy industry between 1889 and the 1920s. The valley transformed in the 1890s from wheat to row farming, and during World War Two they brought in Mexicans and Latinos to replace the Japanese who were relegated to detention camps during the war. Originally produce was shipped by train, sea, and truck. From the 1920s to the 1970s ninety percent of the produce was shipped by train. Today it is all done by truck. And there have been major changes in packaging, sales, and marketing as well. I could have spent more time there, but we had less than an hour before we had to head back home.

So the next time you go down to Salinas Valley, plan to visit The Farm and the Steinbeck Museum. You won't be sorry.

Program coordinator: Anita Rao

Tour Guide: Jesse Warr

YOU CAN'T BEAT (AL'S TOUR OF) CITY HALL

Review by Michael Crowe

Once the main tour of the city was over, I hopped a 71 to Haight Ashbury, jumped a 22 to Alamo Square, and then a 21 to City Hall. As I whizzed through the Sunset District, I was heard to say, "You never see the sun set in the Sunset." This is due to the fog, of course.

I was shoved off the crowded bus at the next stop, and in my dazed state, became aware of the Pioneer Monument at the Civic Center. The California State flag you see unfurling in the breeze outside represents a Star for Texas, and a bear to represent California. Al Lopez, our guide and local expert on all things City Hall, told us that Texas started the Mexican-American War, and then dragged the rest of the U.S. into it. Indeed, we may still have been a part of Mexico if not for that oft-forgotten war.

Then I heard answers to questions that have occurred to some tourists. Why is the word "Trust" painted on Odd Fellows Hall? Not for nothing, as they say in Gotham. It is visible from the windows of City Hall, there to remind the politicians that work under its dome to be truthful and honest. What happened to the reflecting pools outside City Hall? They have been filled in due to the local homeless population's habit of using them as public baths.

Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph was largely responsible for rebuilding San Francisco some years after the earthquake of 1906. One of the most significant steps was realized with the opening in 1915 of the new City Hall, or "The People's Palace," as Sunny Jim called it.

Later City Hall became known as "The Party Palace." Not much has changed. A million dollars a year are earned from events taking place at City Hall. Marriages were once performed for free, but now cost \$200.00. About 4,000 gay (and straight) couples got married at City Hall during the two months gay marriages were considered legal in San Francisco. There are busts inside City Hall of former mayors Moscone and Feinstein, as well as Harvey Milk, who was assassinated at the same time as Moscone.

City Hall has the fifth largest dome in the world. If you look closely at the inside of the dome, you can spot the figure of the Sun King, Louis the Fourteenth of France, fourteen times. This was supposedly to honor Sunny Jim, but the architect did not allow the Mayor to put his name on the wall. Undeterred, Sunny Jim had his name engraved in the wall after the building was complete. You can also find many dahlias, our city flower, inside the dome and on the carpets. Cont'd on page 14

YOU CAN'T BEAT (AL'S TOUR OF) CITY HALL, Cont'd from page 13

After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the underside of the dome looked like a giant, cracked eggshell. There are now only two remaining cracks left from the complete retrofit that took place afterwards. Work started in 1995 and finished four years later in 1999. The gold you see in and outside the building is 23.5 Karat gold. Those who attempt to break in will encounter a security system that utilizes lasers. There is a panic room, called "the Chamber," in a secret location within the walls. There is also a Chamber for the Board of Supervisors, which may or may not be a reason to panic.

As part of the retrofit, six hundred pillars were placed underneath the building. It has a "base isolator" as well, so the building is in good shape for any future quakes. The building can now move twenty-six inches in any direction while sustaining minimal damage. The Loma Prieta quake was so violent it moved the lead-lined dome off its base, making it necessary to set it back into place during the retrofit.

There is one more fascinating point. It is generally agreed that the new City Hall (1915) was an improvement over the original (1899) that was destroyed in the '06 quake. The new building has a dome that rises more than 307 feet – 14 inches taller than the dome of the U.S. Capitol. It seems that everyone knew that a state capitol should not be taller than our nation's Capitol. Amazingly enough, the old dome was even taller. Imagine the conversation:

President Wilson: "Mr. Rolph, where do you get off building a City Hall that is taller than our Capitol in Washington?"

Mayor Rolph: "We know that, Mr. President, and we apologize. But it's shorter than it was!"

Michael Crowe

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