

When the Carmel 'Bohemians' met The Ladies of The Arts & Crafts Club

PacRep's Circle Theatre Site Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Compiled by Marcia Hardy & Stephen Moorer from various sources, including The State of California/ Resources Agency Dept. of Parks & Rec Building, Structure and Object Record; PacRep Theatre archives; historical archives at Harrison Memorial Library: The Carmel Whirl, 5/24/09; Special to The Mercury Herald, 1914; and "The Story of the Arts & Crafts" by Mary E. Hand in The Carmel Cymbal, 7/27/26.

One hundred years ago the ambitious women of The Arts & Crafts Club of Carmel began a cultural faction that would establish Carmel as a major world arts center. Balancing their "act" were the poets and writers of the international Bohemian movement who were making their migration to Carmel, many from the earthquake-ravaged San Francisco. Their combined creative energy lives on, evidenced by the robust performing, literary and visual arts tradition that is the hallmark of Carmel-by-the-Sea today.

Cultural Spasms

The term "Bohemian" was used to describe free-living, free thinking people who disregarded conventional standards of behavior. They were independent, artistic, witty and colorful. The Bohemian Movement began in early 19th century Paris, catching fire in the States at the turn of the 20th century. The movement brought forth deep changes in cul-

ture and oversaw a clash of high and low art that sent spasms through literature, painting, sculpture and music that continue to this day.

The American "bohemians" began their move to Carmel between 1905 and 1907. Included in this wave of creative nomads were George Sterling (the unofficial Poet Laureate of San Francisco), Mary Austin, Jimmy Hopper, Nora May French, Jack London, Am-brose Bierce, Upton Sinclair, Herbert Heron and Sinclair Lewis. The fame and sometimes scandalous behavior of the local Bohemians made the town widely known, leading the local businessmen to publicize quirky behavior rather than to criticize it, as in the case of Mary Austin, who sometimes "dressed like an Indian" and did her writing in a treehouse.

These "Carmelites", as they were known, spent their time communing with nature (and each other) while creating and perfecting their works — surrounded by the crashing waves, dunes and forests, or among their peers at various gathering spots including the Pine Inn and the Arts & Crafts Clubhouse & Hall.

"Private Theatricals"

Established in 1905, The Arts and Crafts Club of Carmel held their first exhibitions in the Old Bath House at the foot of Ocean, and in the Pine Inn Hotel lobby, until 1906 when the Carmel Development Company presented the club with a small building on Ocean Ave. They held their first large exhibit in this temporary facility

and, later that year, incorporated and purchased a site to erect a permanent clubhouse. For \$600 they purchased an 80-foot wide lot on Casanova between 8th & 9th, and built a small private hall (at a cost of \$2,500). On August 1, 1907, the clubhouse formally opened with an exhibit of pictures. Lectures, dances, recitals, fundraisers and "private theatricals" by Sterling, Austin and the other poets soon followed. Carmel's historic performing arts tradition was born.

National Recognition

By 1910, the ladies of The Arts & Crafts Club were fully engaged. Forty-six people attended their Third Annual Breakfast at Pebble Beach Lodge on July 12. "Afterwards, all repaired to the reception hall where a most enjoyable hour was spent chatting and discussing the success of the play recently given at the Forest Theater in Carmel." Later that month the club was busy raising funds to support the arts. They held an International Market "opposite the Pine Inn...with...peanut, popcorn and flower vendors in costume." At the clubhouse, they held a card party with prizes, and an exhibit of paintings. To quote a source of the day, "The Fancy Dress Ball in the evening at The Arts & Crafts Hall presented a gay scene." During this time, The School of Arts & Crafts was also going strong with a series of original plays inaugurated with Perry Newberry's farce "Burn It."

A 1914 issue of The Clubwoman read,

"Probably no other women's club in the country has achieved a more remarkable success in the way of dramatic ventures than has the Carmel Club of Arts & Crafts." The Mercury Herald noted, "...a fever of activity seems to have seized the community and each newcomer is immediately inoculated and begins with great enthusiasm to do something...with plays, studios and studies..." In 1918, poet Mary Austin spoke at the clubhouse on "The New Principle of Nationality" as a benefit for Armenian and Syrian relief.

PacRep as Steward

By 1922, The Carmel Club of Arts & Crafts had begun formulating plans to build a little theatre and in 1924 completed work on the Arts & Crafts Theatre (also known as the Abalone Theatre, Carmel Playhouse, Filmarte and, ultimately, the Golden Bough Theatre). The theatre and the original clubhouse were both destroyed by the Golden Bough Fire of 1949. This historic ground — the original site of one of the oldest performing arts venues in California — is now the site of the combined Circle Theatre and Golden Bough Playhouse. And Pacific Repertory Theatre, as steward of the venerable Playhouse, continues to honor the tradition of performing arts in Carmel. For further information of PacRep and its upcoming season of plays and musicals, call 622-0100 or on the web at www.pacrep.org.

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within the first three to five years.

A new initiative, Jones New York In The Classroom, is working to reverse that trend. Working with four non profit teacher groups-TeachersCount, New Teacher Academy, Fund for Teachers, Adopt-A-Classroom- the initiative will focus its support of teachers on the three R's: Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition of teachers.

What can you do to help?

Get involved with your local school district by adopting a classroom or shopping for the cause during this fall at select retailers and into the holiday season.

Here are just a few ideas of how you can give a gift that gives back:

- Where Education is

Always in Fashion-Consumers who purchase the Jones New York In The Classroom apple icon tshirt (\$20), which is available at www.jnyintheclassroom.org and in more than 150 department stores this fall, will help support the Jones New York In The Classroom non-profit beneficiaries with 100 percent of the profits from these sales.

• Show Your Support- 100 percent of the proceeds from the Jones New York In The Classroom "Support America's Teachers" car magnet (\$3) will be donated to support non-profit charities committed to supporting teachers and education enhancing programs. To order, visit www.jnyintheclassroom.org.

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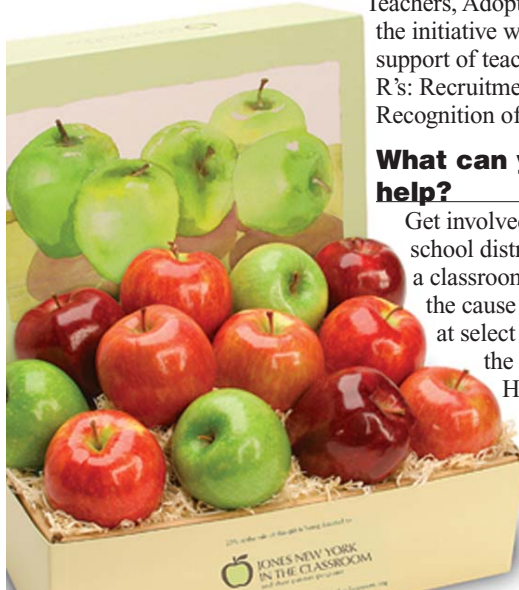
all the products will be used to recruit, retain, and recognize new teachers and help teachers who already buy supplies for their classroom-currently, spending about \$1,200 of their own money each year. To learn more, visit www.jnyintheclassroom.org.

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