

A TOUCH OF OLD SANTA BARBARA



Till the Tune Ends

by Margery Baragona

IN THE TUMULTUOUS years of World War II as the world toppled, we at La Cumbre Junior

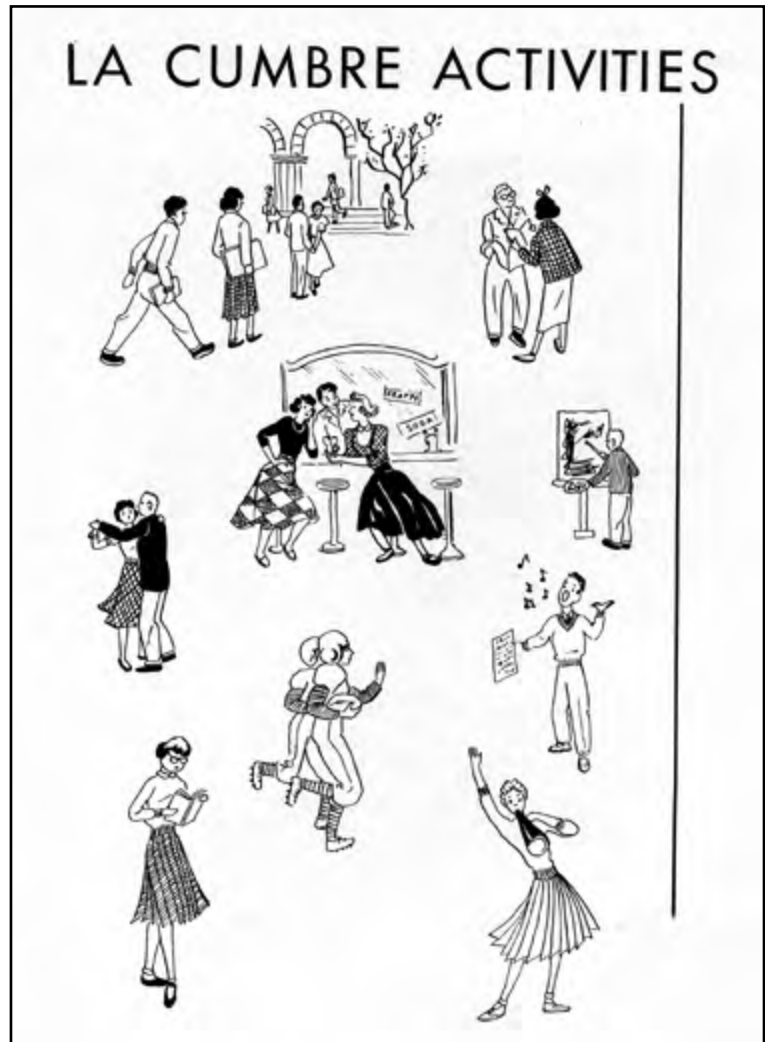
High had our own worries - Friday night at Garfield School. Each Friday night there was a dance! New to hormones, wearing lipstick and boy-girl socializing, it was "the event." Popular records played on the Victrola as we couples fumbled and clumsily made our way around the wooden floor. No instruction was given; we took it very seriously, although adults viewing would have doubled over with laughter. There must have been an adult chaperone. Parents arrived promptly at nine to insure no hanky-panky, and take us home. Such innocence! No smoking, no alcohol, no drugs...just boys and girls making feeble attempts at the art of growing up. And feeble they were. Besides the bungled attempts at dancing, there was the fear of not being chosen as a partner - a slight that would remain a lifetime. Friday night remained an almost sacred event and missing one was beyond disappointment.

A few of us who truly enjoyed the dancing persuaded our parents to pay and let us go to Miss Gaily's dancing school. She gave the lessons in an impressive building at Anacapa and Sola, now a Real Estate office. My friend LaRae Lindhorst and I took the bus to State and Anapamu and walked four blocks, stopping at a rest room in a restaurant to reapply our lipstick and making sure we looked "swell." Miss Gaily, a diminutive woman, would begin the session by showing us how to hold one another; we giggled nervously as our sweaty palms intermingled. For some reason a tall David Yager would often be my partner. With the critical eye of a tailor's daughter, I was aware that his pants were too short. I wish I could remember the other boys. I do remember the heartthrob, George Bartel. When he left Santa Barbara before High School, girls wept for days.

In our classes Miss Gaily taught more sophisticated skills, how to dance at a cotillion, how the gentlemen asked the ladies to dance, the art of "cutting in," and other perceived necessities. Later, I am afraid, these talents were seldom put to use. The boys were embarrassed by her instructions while the girls smirked at their immaturity and discomfort. The hour went by quickly, I don't remember how we got home. In those days there were not too many two-car families so moms weren't always available.

In June we graduated from the ninth grade with festivities and excitement, self-conscious and clumsy in our new high heels. What lay ahead was our summer of sun at East Beach. We swathed in baby oil mixed with iodine to make us tan more quickly. We squealed in the cool waves if we ventured that far from our blankets. We indulged in lots of hamburgers, ice cream, and gossip. Our dancing days seemed far behind. Begrudgingly, one August afternoon we left the beach, walking slowly up Milpas Street. We heard horns honking. What could be happening? As we neared State and Anapamu we suddenly became aware of the reason for the commotion. The war was OVER! It was August 14, 1945.

Several weeks later, in this new world, we became Dons at Santa Barbara High. There would be many dances ahead and the tune continues.



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Our Beautiful "Muni"

By Margery Baragona



IN THOSE DISTANT DIM DAYS of World War II, I recall how scary were the shrill sounds of air raid sirens awakening us. The sirens were located at the Hoff Army Hospital, a major medical facility west of State Street and on both sides of Las Positas. I am not sure why Santa Barbara was chosen but it was a

large part of our city in wartime. As the war ended in 1945 the facility gradually closed. It was a huge undertaking to demolish buildings and move others. Some were transferred to the low cost housing development, Pilgrim Terrace, and a few to near Turnpike. The Oaks Nursery School started on the hospital grounds. Several buildings remain today. However, what I am interested in is how our majestic and beautifully maintained public golf course came to be on much of the land Hoff Army Hospital once occupied.

Early in 1948 farsighted people (including my mother, an energetic athletic woman) thought that our paradise should have, as many cities did, a public golf course. Committees were formed, the idea was debated, problems were solved, and other problems became evident. The Army donated 26.02 acres and for \$100,000, the city purchased land from the Nineteenth Agricultural District. A petition requiring 2,300 signatures was put on the ballot; it passed. Delays mounted and problems persisted. An additional hundred thousand dollars was raised by public subscription. There were 61 people on the committee, which worked on these troublesome



Margery Baragona's parents, Louis and Lillian Marcus, totaling up their golf scores.

issues. Can you imagine 61 people agreeing on anything? Funds in the amount of \$160,000 were finally allotted for construction, but the Korean War started and the National Security Board halted work as some of the materials were needed elsewhere. As completion was nearing in 1957 the fees were set, \$5.00 for membership and "working people" would pay 50 cents per round! The newspaper articles are fascinating, showing the conflict in a city trying to succeed with something new. Finally, late in 1958 the course opened, although the configuration of the holes differed from the course today. My mother, although a country club member herself, had always felt that there should be a course for everyone. For her hard work and dedication she was afforded the honor of being the first woman to tee off.

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By Margery Baragona

Sunday Drives

AS WE AGE OUR memories are pervasive. They are vivid and indelible even if they are infected with the distortions of time.

In the forties movies were for Saturday, and Sunday was for long automobile rides.

On a typical Sunday we drove State Street to Cabrillo, to the bird refuge intently looking for the “hobo” camp on the Child’s estate, then Coast Village, the Biltmore, Channel Drive and seeing the vast serenity of the cemetery. Sometimes we continued on to Montecito, to admire green lawns, tidy hedges, and huge homes. I tried to picture that people actually lived in them.

Occasionally my father took me down to the polo matches; it was exciting to see and hear the galloping horses and the clack of the mallet against the white polo ball.

Another favorite route was to West Beach with the hope of a pony ride and ice cream cone at Sheetz (now Sambos) and then on to the Mesa with oil derricks pumping, pumping, with the hills vacant.

As a teenager I was fortunate to have a boyfriend, Jim Leslie, who could drive his aunt’s 1939 Pontiac convertible. He polished it beautifully for her, — and so was rewarded with this treat. With him I discovered East Valley Road, Sycamore Canyon, Rattlesnake Canyon, and areas far removed from my home on Calle Rosales.

A most memorable ride when I was 15 was an outing to Paradise Camp with Art Franz, Dave Lopez, and La Rae Lindhorst. While we picnicked a truck roared up, the driver jumped out and commandeered the boys to come immediately to help fight a forest fire. Motioning to La Rae and myself he said, “Go to the highway and hitch a ride home,” — we did.

The world has certainly changed but not the memories of my Sunday outings.



Ready for a Sunday drive!

Margery Baragona sits on the running board of a Ford two-door (Tudor) sedan, probably a 1934 though possibly a 1933 (the grill was slightly different). Her husband Jim Wilson noted that “as a hot-rodder, I owned a 1934 for 17 years.”

Treasures For All

By Marjorie Baragona

IN THESE BEWILDERING post-pandemic days we should put aside our dormant time and prepare for the future. A necessary preparation is how to dispose of our “treasures,” our beloved keepsakes. We all have mementos special to us which we think will delight and be appreciated by others. Luckily as an only child I do not face any conflict or division as some families do.

Actually, I have a different problem – no one wants anything! Antiques from generations past, items handed down to me, and many objects from my travels, seemingly have no significance to others. Even when I explain their histories there are no takers. I have a lovely blue and white ginger jar my grandmother brought precariously from England in 1920. Dishes from coronations including the Prince of Wales and Wally Simpson made before he abdicated. Chinese artifacts beautifully detailed and undoubtedly worth a great deal. A tea set from a 1900 Atlantic City Fair. Plates I brought back from shops along the Nile, Casablanca, Thailand, and other remembrances of exotic trips. Still no takers.



In our small house I had my mother's china, 16-place settings of mine, my late mother-in-law's wedding china and assorted dishes from both of my grandmothers. To this add silver service pieces and sterling flatware. Thankfully, at last, a distant cousin came and relieved me of some of this bounty. We carefully packed a good portion and I lovingly said good-bye. Another cousin, who has antique malls in Wisconsin, offers this suggestion: if you have old pictures of unknown relatives, they can find a home. She says they sell very well; people frame and hang them in their homes, regardless of who these people might have been.

I guess I will have to hope that someday there will be a change of heart and my treasures will find good homes. When I asked one of my sons what piece of our history would he most cherish, he replied, “the refrigerator.”



Born and raised in Santa Barbara, I enjoyed a career in real estate. In retirement I entertain, have traveled extensively, and am an avid reader. I'm kept busy with a large family and have met many lovely people at the Society. It was fun to write of the Santa Barbara of old.



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Let's Have a Show

By Margery Baragona

ONE WONDERS, what was the initial inspiration? Was it Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland proclaiming in an early 1940s movie, "Let's Have a Show," or was it an enterprising youth council member who thought that ticket sales from a local variety show might save the fading Santa Barbara Carrillo Recreational Center (The Rec)? The Parks and Recreation Department needed funds to decorate and furnish the youth lounge. Wartime had put a hold on any renovations, but now in 1946 repairs could begin. So a group of Santa Barbara High School students wrote and produced a musical entitled *On the Corner of State and Anapamu*. At that time the corner was our favorite gathering spot where "it" all happened.

Jack Richards, a career educator, was designated lyricist. Pete Urquidi was chosen to write the music. Pete went on to a fulfilling career playing with many first-rate bands in Las Vegas.

After tedious and extensive rehearsals a talented group put on three shows, the nights of April 15, 16, and 17, 1946. The lead singer was Damita Jo DeBlanc, who later became a popular singer with some of the country's best groups in the 1940s and 50s. I once saw her perform at the Fillmore in San Francisco. I even got to see her backstage and help with her makeup. Recently she was chosen for the Wall of Fame at Santa Barbara High School. Master of ceremonies was Peter Wolf, bright and charismatic. He was also the director along with George Velliotes, the high school student body president. The opening act was Elmer Coombs and Bob Jones doing an impersonation of Carmen Miranda. Can you imagine? The show had nine musical numbers and an eight-piece band. Some other members of this infamous cast were Ray Cavallaro, Ken Kruger Eleanor Serena, Pat Moberly, Esther Jenderson, Tommy Hartnack, Anita Stahmer, and Marion Sabiron. With so many talented people there were lots of jokes, which we kids loved. However, *The News Press* in their review of April 15th thought the music good but definitely not the jokes. In spite of their criticism, audiences responded enthusiastically and each performance was sold out. Jeanne Richards, also in the cast, widow of Jack, retains the rights to the words and music. We old-timers would love to see a revival. Seventy-one years is a long time to wait. With these talented people and their hard work we revived The Rec.

Want to have a show?



GAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Introduction and Prologue Band, Esther Jenderson, Ray Cavallero, Kenny Kruger, Jim Flores and James Denton.

Act I

State and Anapamu Elmer Coombs, Pete Wolf, Bob Jones, Sue Hutchinson, Marilyn Whaley and Carolyn Whaley.

Honey Keep Your Mind on Love Jeannine Lombard, Eleanor Serena, Dell Baldwin, Pat Moberly and Chorus Girls.

Mama Eu Quiero Bob Jones and Elmer Coombs

Inla Dinka Da Elmer Coombs, Anna Gutierrez, Jeannine Lombard, Ray Cavallero and James Denton.

Hold These Dreams Ray Cavallero

Radio Lowlights of the Air Peter Wolf, George Velliotes, Tom Hartnack, John Nettleship, Mike Ryan, Bob Jones, Pat Moberly, Elmer Coombs, Jeannine Lombard, Dell Baldwin, Anna Gutierrez and Harold Hill.

See You Again Jeannine Lombard, Anna Gutierrez, Ray Cavallero and James Denton.

Professor Glorhead Pete Wolf

Buckle Down Winsocli Ray Cavallero and Chorus Girls

State and Anapamu Bob Jones, Elmer Coombs, Pete Wolf, George Velliotes and Leone Clark.

Intermission—Entertainment by Tom Headley and Jack McNamara

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