



Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”

Volume 15: Number 01

January 2008

Here we are at the beginning of the New Year 2008. It never ceases to amaze me how fast the years go by and 2007 was no different. It was just like yesterday when I became the President of our club. I enjoyed every minute of being President of this club. But I have to give thanks to those people who helped me make it through a successful year. My FIVE in my cell phone are No 1, Annie and Bob Dallow. Thankfully my long distance calls are free! I can't Thank You guys enough for all your help and still answering the phone after my 5th call in a row! What I say below continues for you too. No 2, Bob and Cheryle O'Connor. I have finally spelled your name (Cheryle) correctly! You guys must have had a few laughs after the times I called because of the silly questions I asked. Especially, based on the time of the night! Sorry I called so late some times. You know, I think I owe you guys a thank you too for still answering the phone after my 5th call in a row. But it never mattered when I called or what I asked, you always answered but you did laugh at me! And you know I loved it! We had a lot of laughs. No 3, Millie and Wayne Warner. I never had a hard time reaching Wayne, he was always there to discuss the budget or when I needed money. Thanks Wayne because I hated using those ATM machines at the Casinos. JUST KIDDING! Wayne did a great job last year as our Treasurer and I thank him very much. No 4, Joe Innecken. Joe, was our Vice President last year and did a great job filling in for me when I had to take some time off. He also had the responsibility of printing Thank You cards for both the Corresponding Secretary and our members that would win the raffle prizes. Thanks Joe for your help! No 5, Les Boynton. Yes, believe it or not he actually helped me. I could not have done it without his support, his sense of humor, his patience, his love and his edits of my newsletters (hee, hee, hee!). I want to give a Special Thanks to the rest of the board members. The members of this club should understand that you have a great board working for you! To the rest of our friends, special thanks for your help too!

We have a new sponsor, The Christmas Mart has joined with us as a sponsor. They carry all villages and other gift items to help fill that void in your home. The Christmas Mart is located at 652 Pine Knot Blvd. Big Bear Lake, Phone number (909)866-8468. Take a little day trip to the mountains above San Bernardino and do some sight seeing and shopping. Veronica Embry is the Department 56 specialist.

I want to remind everyone that our regular club meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 23rd, 2008 at the Sharp Spectrum. Lisa Johnson, our Department 56 Representative, will be our evening's program.

See you there, *Karen*

MINDLESS MUTTERING...

...by Bob O'Connor

Now that our 2007 open house season is over lets review one very important decision. At the beginning of this year's tour we decided to make charitable donations instead of bringing host or hostess gifts. Each open house determined what charity they wished to support and guests donated according to their own feelings with no minimum amount required.



The charities represented were:

- National Parkinson Foundation Orange County Chapter (NPFOCC)*
- Lions Den Recovery Center*
- Saddleback Valley Hospice*
- American Cancer Society*
- American Heart Association*
- UCSD Burn Center of San Diego*
- Make-A-Wish Foundation of San Diego*
- Alzheimer's Foundation of America*
- Charlie Garten Memorial Scholarship Fund*
- American Diabetes Association*

We always knew the members of the San Diego Fifty Sixers were a great bunch of people. They have now proven with their checkbooks that they are also a very generous and caring group. The total amount of money raised for the charities listed above is \$2,755.00. Thank you.

This area of the newsletter is used normally to list the lucky raffle and door prize winners. Since there was no December meeting there were no individual prize winners but we all won by attending the open houses.

I have made a point of listing our sponsors in January with addresses, phone numbers and web sites or e-mail wherever possible. This is the list for this year.

Canterbury Gardens:

2402 So. Escondido Blvd, Escondido, CA. 92025
(760)746-1400, www.canterburygardens.com

Casual Living:

1036 North E Street, San Bernardino, CA. 92440
(909)888-8053, casualiving56@msn.com

City Lights:

1212 Knoxville, San Diego, CA. 92110
(619)275-1006, www.citylightscollectibles.com

Creative Memories, Millie Warner, Consultant:

3009 Union Street #1, San Diego, CA
(619)291-1678, millie.warner@cox.net

The Mole Hole:

638 Camino de los Mares G140, San Clemente, CA.92673 (800)863-5395

The Christmas Mart:

652 Pine Knot Blvd. Big Bear Lake, CA. 92315
(909)866-8468, www.thechristmasmart.com

SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS' OFFICERS		
President	Karen Boynton	858-748-4291
Vice-President	Joe Innecken	858-277-7312
Rec. Secretary	Janet Rodgers	619-449-0120
Treasurer	Wayne Warner	619-291-1678
Corr. Secretary	Norma McColley	858-618-2455
Publicity	Jon Sage	858-484-2533
Historian	Claire Caldwell	619-280-1048
Parliamentarian	Bob Dallow	949-498-1356
Hospitality	Mary Marshall	619-262-0351
Membership	Cheryle O'Connor	760-789-3957
Past President	Annie Dallow	949-498-1356
Village Views	Bob O'Connor	760-789-3957

NOW THIS WAS AN OPEN HOUSE

By Bob Dallow

Of all the open houses we saw this year, the most awe-inspiring was at Pat and Dick's house. You say you don't know them? Sure, you do, although it would probably be more correct to refer to them as President and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon. And the house was the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda.

It's always an interesting place to visit, but this year was especially fascinating to us as village collectors. A large auditorium-type room held a magnificent model train display. The layout was 40' by 34' with a central mountain that extended 14 feet high. The sloping hillsides were covered by snow-covered trees above the frost line, as well as pine groves, and colorful autumn trees, depending on where you were standing. The display took one month to complete.

Twenty-three model trains in six gauges – G, Standard, O, S, On30, and HO – cut their way through mountain tunnels, across bridges, and through small villages on 1000 feet of track. Over 5000 model trees were included in the display which featured a 1950's Marx Circus Set, and a 14 foot Golden Gate Suspension Bridge.

But here's the best part...the villages that all those trains were coursing through had a very familiar look to Annie and me. When you first entered the room, twenty-two Christmas in the City buildings on three levels presented an imposing skyline. Naturally we thought it was the best part of the display, but other collectors could be equally prejudiced.

As you rounded the corner, the scene became a very wintry one with colorful North Pole buildings and the usual plethora of elves. Then you moved on to autumn with hundreds of red, yellow, and orange trees framing a Halloween village. Continuing, the next corner brought you to the quaintness of Dickens' Village. It was followed by a central area containing the circus train. And on we went to Snow Village with some impressively cute vignettes to accompany the main display. Next came San Francisco and that very large bridge, followed finally by a small (what else?) Seasons Bay scene.

Members of Western Division of the Train Collectors Association were responsible for the rail displays, while the Department 56 store in Downtown Disney created the village scenes. Unfortunately we were unprepared for the visual excitement, and we didn't have a camera with us, so all we can offer is this printed recap.

The train show at the Nixon Library is extended until February 3 just in case any of you wish to see it in person.

Collectively Speaking

...BY **BOB DALLOW**

Here we go with the start of our annual tour through the new releases in all of the villages. Since October precedes

December, let's start with a glimpse at each of the new Halloween pieces. That includes the new Snow Village Halloween pieces, as well as those located in the General Village Accessories. After all, there really is no distinction in the scary scenes created by club members who prefer orange and black to red and green items.

Did you ever wonder where the children in the Halloween village learn their mysterious craft? Wonder no more! *Ghoul School* provides the answer. It resembles a typical one room schoolhouse, but its condition would seem to merit a bond issue to return it to its former state. Bats circle the bell tower, and pumpkins beside the front door serve to confirm its seasonal status. Lots of kids think their teacher is a witch, but as the accessory *Little Ghouls' Field Trip* depicts, this trio of little monsters in costume really does have a witch as their teacher.



The Grimsly family estate continues to grow with the introduction of *Grimsly's House Of Oddities* (left). This red brick building has a large variety of spooky symbols on and around it. Apparently it is some sort of "museum of the bizarre" as a sign beside the front door reads "Ticket Sales." A related accessory is also available, enabling us to get our first look at the *Grimsly Family*. It's a fairly typical suburban family – Dad, Mom with a bat umbrella, the two headed daughter, and a son with fangs and bat wings. He's holding a chain with the family pet, a frog, at the end of the leash, just waiting to be kissed.

The next lit piece is *Monsters Of The Deep*. This is a Collectors' Edition piece, limited to 13,000 pieces. Sea creatures rotate around the aquarium. There are spooky lighting effects to illustrate a scary sea monster that can break out of its tank. The entire building is surrounded by realistic moss to enhance the image. The accompanying accessory is *Time To Feed The Monsters*. A decrepit man with scars on his head and arms is carrying two buckets of unknown creatures to the monsters. Do you wonder how he got those scars?

Rickety Railroad Station is the final lit building for this year. It commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Halloween collection, but it is not a limited edition. Although it has both "Arrivals" and "Departures" doors, the departure door is nailed shut. The detail on this piece is finely honed, even including a traveling salesman who seems fated to go nowhere. In addition to the visual impact, the station also has spooky railroad sound effects. Accompanying the building is *Haunted Rails Engine and Coal Car*, also a tenth anniversary piece but not limited to year of production. This lighted accessory has a fierce-looking jack-o-lantern on its front. In each of the next three years, additional cars will be issued to complete the train which is not operational. Despite that, these two pieces would be ideal to any collectors who are into both Halloween and trains. Hmm...does that bring anyone to mind for you?

A final accompaniment to the railroad scene is *Time's A-Wasting*, a skeleton train conductor. Like the other pieces in this series, it is not a limited edition but is the first of similar pieces to be released over a four year period. The conductor is holding a lantern that lights with LED bulbs and is adapter compatible.

The fifth annual *Gravely Haunting* piece once again features Gravely, the Butler. It is a limited to 2008 release. The butler is carrying a real feather duster in one hand and a bird cage in the other. At his feet a curious black cat has his eyes focused on the inhabitant of that cage. The requisite tombstone proclaims the demise of Dust Bunny.



Two accessories feature famed spooky individuals. Universal Studios has licensed both *Photos With Frankenstein* (left) and *Autographs With Dracula* (right). Little kids in costume are posed with each of the monsters. The famed pair does not seem very scary, but are cooperating with the general public, much as they might at the famed amusement park.



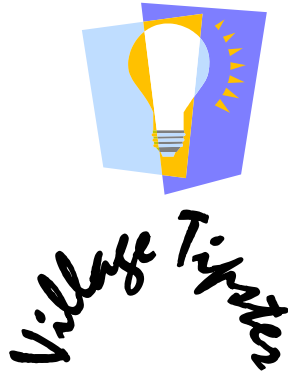
Come In If You Dare is the first of four annual Halloween party accessories. While this piece is not limited to year of production, look for additional party accessories over the next three years. The large box which makes up the house has warning signs on it as well as a giant spider and bats hanging from it. A "Beware Of The Dog" sign hangs over a sleeping pooch who would seem to pose no danger to anything but his food dish.

General Village Halloween Accessories are divided by category in the following paragraphs. Let's start with three animated pieces. *Scary Walk* is similar in design to the many skating ponds with twirling skaters. In this instance a witch flies overhead as children flee, seeking safety. The eyes on the haunted oak tree seem to follow the children as they make their escape. *Bone Appetite* is the latest in the bones series. In this case a hobo skeleton warms himself by a flickering campfire. I'm not sure any of us want to know what delicacy he's cooking at the end of a stick. *Gothic Gate* is a jumble of scary items draped over a lighted fence and gate.

Other general accessories number three. *Airborne Witch* is a stationery creature that appears as if it should be flying. She rises from a tree trunk and could readily fill a gap anywhere in your display. *Pumpkin Heads* feature five jack-o-lanterns arrayed around a fence. There have been several *Halloween Decorating Sets* in the past. The latest version once again contains a series of fall decorations that can be placed throughout your display.

Lighted pieces include some items whose names are rather self-descriptive. Four of the five pieces can be used with batteries, the adapter packs, or the lighting and accessories system. The fifth is *Replacement 12 Volt Orange Bulbs*. The display pieces include *Corn Stalk Lanterns*, *Scary Street Lights*, *Candy Corn Lawn Lights*, and a *String Of 8 Eyeball Lights*.

Finally there are three trees – *Halloween Oak Tree*, ten inches tall; *Lit Halloween Trees*, a trio of black trees on a single base; and *Spooky Spider Trees*, a set of two to intensify the atmosphere in your display.



ON THE OPEN HOUSE TOUR #2

For the first third of our open house tour, you visited collectors, who focused the majority of their creative attention to a single village. In this article, we will take a look at the second third of the Open House Tour. The Browns, the Bechtels, and the Warners allowed us to enjoy a variety of villages at their homes.

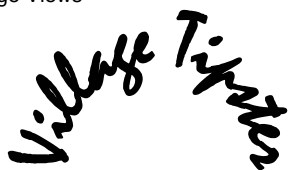
At our fourth stop on the tour, Vern and Michele Brown provided us with displays of North Pole, New England, and the Holy Land. Michele's favorite parts of the villages included the stream in North Pole, which was made using crushed tempered glass that was backlit by blue Christmas lights, the same type of lighting that was used to light the effective mountain backdrops. She also loved the water scenes and the farm land in New England. She gives Vern a big "thumbs up" for the nice job that he does with all the displays that he creates. "I really enjoy them," she says, and she wouldn't do a thing differently, because "I don't put the displays together." Vern is the major displayer at the Brown home, and he had lots of information to share with his guests. In the North Pole Village, he made roads using a roll-up shade cut to size and painted pale blue. Another fan favorite were his SANTA CLAUS topiaries and some of his hedges, which were cut to shape from Scotch Brite scouring

pads and flocked with snow. Guests also enjoyed the colorful cargo on his NP train. While Vern creates one of the best New England Villages that I've seen, both he and Michele were disappointed that the waterfalls had small leaks, even though Vern had a feeling that that might happen because of time and construction constraints. Guests asked questions about his water effect for the bay. The bay is created using a diffuser panel that is painted on the back to give the appearance of differing depths. Many guests also asked Vern about the red hedge that he used in New England. He purchased that from Scenic Express. The Brown's Holy Land was full of eye-catching techniques. Vern made his cobblestone paths using the bottoms of Styrofoam takeout trays (An old Nick Reid technique). Vern was pleased with the results of his crop rows, which were made using paint brush bristles. His favorite part of the Holy Land display, as well as being a guest favorite, was his marketplace. This focal point of his display was filled with bright and colorful wares that he and Michele had collected at the many gatherings they attend. That's also where they found all of those non-Department 56 figures that reside in this and his other villages. Vern says, "Visitors always ask how do you come up with the ideas, and how do you put the display together?" In earlier years, he used a general drawing that showed the footprint of the display with key elements added, but the display never came out the way it was on paper. Now he has an idea of certain features that he wants to include, and when he adds the roads "it seems like the buildings have natural places to go."

At our fifth stop, Dave and Shirley Bechtel presented us with Dickens Village, Christmas in the City, North Pole Disney, and Merry Makers on display. Their Twelve Days of Christmas clock is still a

crowd pleaser, but Dave and Shirley tried some new things this year that were their favorites as well as favorites of their guests. Dave's favorite part of the display was designing the Christmas in the City display with its houses, streetcar track, and elevated subway. He used Lionel's new Super Streets for a more realistic street track. Dave feels that his elevated subway was visually effective but would have liked to have it both elevated and underground. For his EI train, he created a wonderful passenger platform with lighting. Maybe he'll share with us how he was able to light the platform in some later article or program. Shirley's favorite part of the displays was the Merry Makers, which were set on a platform within the Christmas tree. Both Dave and Shirley were somewhat dissatisfied with the look of the bare platform. After their open house, they tried placing garland around the edge of the platform, making the tree and the platform seem more as one. "Characters and train became a part of the tree instead of the platform. It worked great." Guests expressed interest in the streetcar and subway, the movement within the windows of the Christmas Carol display, and the bridge display. Shirley and Dave took a black-line print from a series in their living room and had it substantially enlarged. They framed it and hung it to be the backdrop for a striking display of vehicles passing over the Brooklyn Bridge. Finally, the Bechtels used picnic/buffet tables beneath their CIC display. This allowed them to have a larger central display and a great place to hide non-Christmas items from their living room.

***The Tipster will continue
the tour on page seven.***



CONTINUED

At our sixth tour stop, Millie and Wayne Warner gave us the chance to view Millie's Christmas in the City, some North Pole, and Wayne's favorite *The Christmas Story Village*. Wayne is glad that Department 56 and Sears teamed up to recreate the buildings from his favorite movie. "I am so glad to be able to have the opportunity to display the great scenes from the movie." He even added a bar of Lifebuoy soap to his display. The Brooklyn Bridge that Dave Bechtel fitted with lights was a big hit with guests. The Warners added their son's old Matchbox cars to the bridge display for detail. Wayne says that without the lights the bridge would have been "just blah." Also, guests were interested in how the revolving tree was lighted and assembled. In true collector fashion, Wayne and Millie wish that they had more space for displaying. Wayne says that he has six trains that he would like to have displayed if he just had more room. Millie says she wished she had never downsized from a 5 bedroom house to a 2 bedroom condo. Ah, the displayer's lament, "More room, more room, more room!" Even so, the Warners make good use of the space that they have when it comes time to display.

Happy New Year!

Winnie

On page two I thanked everyone for your monetary contributions to charity. Marge Bramfeld asked that I thank you for your personal involvement in the annual Lighting Up Lives campaign at Children's Hospital. This is our club charity where "we create a magical world on a tabletop to bring happiness to children suffering with reality". We had a large and very talented group for the set up and a smaller but hard working group for take down. Thank you all. Please plan on getting involved again this year.

Be sure you pay your dues by the end of the January meeting to qualify for the early bird prize. You know you're going to rejoin so you might as well take a chance on winning.

San Diego Fifty-Sixers 2008 Membership Renewal Form

Member Name(s) _____ Address _____ (Including zip) _____ E-Mail Address _____	<p style="text-align: center;">Please circle one</p> Individual - \$24 Household - \$32 Corresponding - \$16 THANK YOU
--	--

Please fill out the above information. Address is needed only if you have had a change during the year or if the information on the roster is incorrect. Include area code with phone numbers and, if available, full e-mail addresses. Be sure to circle the type of membership.

Mail Renewal Form and check to PO Box 23285, San Diego, CA 92193, or bring it with you to the January meeting.



Little Miss Sunshine

We have received no information on club members so we can only hope no news is good news. Be sure to contact Millie Warner about any personal information you feel would be of interest to the membership.

San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month,

January						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



Directions: From either I-805 or I-163 take the Clairemont Mesa exit and proceed east, turn right onto Kearny Villa Road, at Spectrum Center Blvd. turn left. Sharp Spectrum Center Court is the first right after the Marriott Courtyard. When entering the Sharp property the parking lot is through the gate to the right.

At the Sharp Spectrum Center Court
8695 Spectrum Center Court
6:45 social, meeting at 7:15

The **San Diego Fifty Sixers** are members of the

National
Council
of 56 Clubs



SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS		
Calendar of Events -2008		
January	23	New Releases, Presented By Lisa Johnson / Puzzle Review by Bob Dallow
February	27	to be announced
March	26	to be announced
April	23	to be announced
May	28	to be announced
June	25	to be announced
July	23	to be announced
August	27	Power Point Presentation Of 2007 Open Houses / Jon Sage
September	24	Fifteenth Anniversary Party at Tom Hams Lighthouse Restaurant
October	22	to be announced
November	19	to be announced
December		Open Houses All Month... Schedule Will Be Published
Please check the Calendar regularly. These programs are subject to change.		
The board meets each month on the Wednesday before the regular club meeting. Any member is welcome to attend the board meeting. Meetings start at 5:30 pm at Coco's on Balboa in Clairemont.		



Cookie Elves for January will be **Winnie Sage, Annie Dallow, Michele Brown, and Les Boynton.**

