



# Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”  
Volume 15: Number 2 February 2008

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## The Back of the Room

We have lost a voice from the back of the room. Cheryle O'Connor used to tell the story that, when she first joined the club, she came alone and sat silently in back of the room. Lucky for us, after a period of silence as she met members and became more comfortable with the group, she began speaking up. From the back row, Cheryle touched each and every club member. We are all so fortunate to have known her. Cheryle was a great listener. You only had to mention a family anniversary or birthday and from then on, she always remembered it. If you told her of something that you, or a family member, were doing in two months, Cheryle would be asking about it two months plus a day later. Cheryle was a most selfless person. She was always helping or lending or giving. If the Club needed something done, Cheryle was the “Go-to” girl. She stepped right up when I could no longer continue as Membership Chairperson in 2002. She was exceedingly organized and did a great job of setting up Membership Drives at City Lights' Open House each year. Cheryle was a sweetheart with a big smile and a twinkle in her eyes. Like the Cheshire Cat, Cheryle's smile and twinkling eyes will be in our memory forever.

We had a lot of club business to take care of at the January meeting. Karen thanked the outgoing board and “installed” the new one. Treasurer Les Boynton presented the 2008 proposed budget which was accepted by the membership. Jim Murphy presented the annual report from the Financial Review Committee of the Club's 2007 financial records. Thanks to Jim, Dave Bechtel, and Vern Brown for taking on that task. On short notice, Bob O'Connor brought in HOUSE for us to play. Wayne Warner was kind enough to step in and call the game. Congratulations to all our HOUSE winners. Thanks to Bob, Wayne and the January cookie elves for making our meeting so enjoyable.

If you renewed your membership by the end of the January meeting, you may be lucky enough to win some raffle tickets. If you have not yet renewed your membership, the February meeting would be a great time to do that. Just turn in your renewal to Les Boynton or Winnie Sage, who has agreed to take over the membership duties for the time being.

Finally, the Sages are having another open house on Friday Feb. 22 from 3:30 – 8:00PM. Come by if you somehow have missed it or if you just want another view. Yes, the train is still running.

*Jan*

**MINDLESS MUTTERING...**

*...by Bob O'Connor*

To dispel any rumors to the contrary, even though God took my copy writer to be on his staff I shall continue as editor of the Village Views until I get fired.

Due to technical problems Lisa Johnson was unable to present the new releases to us at the January meeting. Lisa will be our program for February, so let's all see what new goodies Department 56 has for us.

As an alternate program we all played house (bingo). The winners and their corresponding prizes were: Sharon Swildens, Patrolling the Road; Claire Caldwell, A Treasure from the Sea; Bob O'Connor, Child's Play; Norma McColley, Sliding Down Cornhill.

Our cookie elves for February will be: Lisa Johnson, Winnie Sage, Dorothy Dees, and Carol Orlando.

I'm a little short on words this month but I want to thank all of you for being here for me and for honoring Cheryle as you did.



**Raffle Drawing Winners for January**

**Canterbury Gardens**

Mission Style House.....Jon Sage

**Casual Living**

Gift Certificate.....Michele Brown

**Christmas Mart**

Gift Certificate.....Winnie Sage

**City Lights**

Ship Figurehead Carver.....Jim Murphy

Lighted Lawn Ornaments.....Jim Murphy

Gumdrop Tree.....Michele Brown

**Creative Memories**

Personal Trimmer.....Lauren Murphy

**Mole Hole**

City Trolley.....Bob O'Connor

**SD 56er's**

Mrs. Claus' Handmade

Christmas Stockings.....Lauren Murphy

**Chick and Maggie Story**

Stardust Refreshment Stand.....Bob Dees

**Anonymous**

Kids, Candy Canes, and

Ronald McDonald's

Lights Up The Night.....Winnie Sage

**Door Prizes Donated by: D56 Lisa Johnson:**

Snowman Computer Bubble Light, Annie Dallow; Lennox Mickey Mouse, Patti Burdick; Penguin Computer Bubble Light, Bob Dees; Snowman Night Light, Janet Rodgers; Santa Computer Bubble Light, Sharon Swildens; Kringles Santa, Claire Caldwell

**Door Prize Donated by Michele Brown:**

Santa Figurine, Linda Morgan

**SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS' OFFICERS**

President	Jon Sage	858-484-2533
Vice-President	Lauren Murphy	619-669-4949
Rec. Secretary	Annie Dallow	949-498-1356
Treasurer	Les Boynton	858-748-4291
Corr. Secretary	Norma McColley	858-618-2455
Publicity	Marge Bramfeld	(619)691-8424
Historian	Claire Caldwell	619-280-1048
Parliamentarian	Bob Dallow	949-498-1356
Hospitality	Mary Marshall	619-262-0351
Membership	Winnie Sage	858-484-2533
Past President	Karen Boynton	858-748-4291
Village Views	Bob O'Connor	760-789-3957

## **Collections**

This newsletter is about collecting. My favorite collection is not North Pole, it is not Snow Village, and it is not even Halloween. My favorite collection is Cheryle. I started collecting her when I was sixteen. It was easy and a lot of fun. With her movies were more realistic, the Del Mar Fair was exciting each year even though everything was always the same, I even looked forward to going to school because I could be with her between classes.

I became a serious collector when I was eighteen, that's when I made her a legal part of my life, my wife. Over the next few years I added several accessories to my collection. The first was Bobby Jr, then Mickey was acquired, not long after that my third accessory, James came along. They were all great additions, but like any collection the first piece is the most valued.

My collection became my reason for living, I worked two and sometimes three jobs to make sure she was well taken care of and in return my collection took care of me. The years seem to fly by, my accessories made collections of there own and through them my collection grew. They no longer required much of my attention, so I turned to my original collection, Cheryle. I became a fanatic about my collection; nothing my collection needed was refused. If she needed buildings, I bought buildings, if it was more trees, more trees were gotten. I even started helping to display all those little objects because it made her happy. Her being happy became my obsession, I had to return some of the happiness I received from her. I realized somewhere along the line I had become one with my collection. What made my collection complete made me complete.

All that hard work over the years finally began to pay off. I could retire and spend all my time playing with my collection. Together we joined other collectors; we compared villages and took trips all over the country and met even more collectors. Life was wonderful.

Suddenly my collection was lost, the most important piece disappeared, Cheryle is no longer here, and there seems to be no reason to go on.

I have found my collection had become friends with hundreds of others and they share my loss. I realize through my collection I had also become friends with them and with their support I shall continue. I may have lost the original piece but all my accessories still make a wonderful collection and I shall rival in it. Memories of my first collection will always remain along with the friends I discovered with her.

Bob O'Connor

### **Our January meeting started with the induction of officers for 2008. They are:**

Jonathan Sage	President
Lauren Murphy	Vice President
Les Boynton	Treasurer
Annie Dallow	Recording Secretary
Norma McColley	Corresponding Secretary

### **Jonathan has filled the committees with the following persons as chairs:**

Winnie Sage	Membership
Bob O'Connor	Newsletter
Mary Marshall	Hospitality
Claire Caldwell	Historian
Marge Bramfeld	Publicity and Lighting Up Lives
Bob Dallow	Parliamentarian

# Collectively Speaking

...BY BOB DALLOW

Here's the second phase of our trip through New Village Pieces Land. Last month we toured Halloween, and we'll

begin this month's sightseeing in the frigid clime of the **North Pole**.

There is a special reason why I chose to begin here. The cover photo on this year's Department 56 village catalog is the *Polar Bear Palace* (below). This is a Collectors' Edition hand-numbered limited edition of 12,000 pieces. It includes several ice sculptures of LED lighted polar bears. The building itself is almost buried in ice and snow. The "cub nursery" can be accessed through an entryway on the right side. A separate accessory, *Polar Carving*, features an elf sculpting a bear based on a posing creature to his left.



*Why did I choose to begin here? Because club members will have a chance to win an artist-signed copy of this brand new building over the next two months. Lisa Johnson, our local Department 56 rep, has acquired just such a piece that will be raffled off with tickets available at the February and March meetings. All receipts for this special raffle will be sent to the American Diabetes Association in loving memory of Cheryle O'Connor. It's a very generous donation, and truly a special opportunity for each of us to continue to honor a dear friend.*

Continuing with North Pole releases...*Rubber Duck Factory* is a cute building with a lit duck pool off to one side. In it an elf spins in a sea of bubbles with baby ducks all around him. A large yellow duck graces a balcony over the twin front doors. The accessory *Duck, Duck, Gray Duck* contains an elfette pulling a toy train of ducklings. The next building, *Twinkle Toes Ballet Academy*, seems to have responded to global warming concerns. It is certainly the "greenest" building that we have seen in North Pole; whether the "green" refers to its heating system is questionable, but certainly the color is a unique hue. Large studio windows on three sides of the second story reveal a ballet class taking place. Recitals are scheduled to take place every Friday, so plan ahead, soccer moms! *The Little Ballerina* is the related accessory. It features a little girl checking her pose in a large mirror.

*Jolly's Jigsaw Puzzle Workshop* is a building seemingly made up of puzzle pieces, several of which are still missing. Even the sign over the front door and the rooftop flag are puzzle pieces. *A Puzzling Sign*, the coordinating accessory, is still under construction as two elves add the final few pieces. Perhaps the most clever part of *Dumpy's Toy Trucks* is the fact that the entire building is in the shape of a dump truck. Hopefully, the related accessory's name is not said with an element of surprise, for *The Truck Works* really is the idea behind it all.

An oversized microphone sits atop the *North Star Karaoke Club* which has large speakers protruding from each side as an elf DJ pollutes the crisp evening air. Elvis the Elf provides his bone-chilling voice in the accessory *Karaoke Night*. The final building is the *Reindeer Flying Feed Store*. Traditionalists will be glad to see it because it most closely resembles the design of early North Pole buildings 18 years ago. *Flight Training*, the related animated accessory, which has its own adapter, features a flying caribou.

There are also five additional North Pole accessories that are not connected with any specific building. Each village gets a new sign. A candy cane striped pole holds a round sign that states "Welcome to the North Pole." The fourth in the series of universal holiday celebrations brings us to *Christmas Around The World – Hawaii*. Flowered leis and a surfboard greet the jolly old elf. A motorcycle and sidecar provide transportation for a pair of elves sporting goggles in *Motorcycle Test Drive*. In *Bringing Home The Tree*, a pair of young elves has jumped aboard the wrapped tree that an elf is pulling home. Finally, some basic elf necessities are taken care of in the *Up North Outhouse* which features two drastically different sized doors for Santa and the elves. One will definitely have shorter lines than the other!

As we turn to **Alpine Village**, the first thing we must do is to establish new ground rules. Last year it was announced that all new Alpine Village pieces would henceforth be limited to year of production. Not so. Neither of the two new buildings is an annual piece. *Castle Wolfstein* (right) may be the most complex piece ever designed for this village. The Bavarian architecture with a drawbridge and turrets also includes lit towers that surround a courtyard. It's a great piece that we will all enjoy when Dorothy and Bob Dees finally hold an open house. The accompanying accessory, *The Night Watchman*, is an imposing figure in traditional Alpine garb. The second building is *Schultz's – Frankfurt's Wurst Restaurant*; similar to many other town square buildings, it is beige in color, and features a pergola with quaint vines growing over the outdoor dining area. *Wursts For The Dachshund*, the accessory, features a stout butcher teasing the dog. Again, there is a new sign in this village, not too cleverly named *Welcome To Alpine Village*.



Four new buildings and five accessories will grace the rural areas of **New England Village**. It starts with an octagonal shaped design, the *Roundel Cottage* (left). This would probably be seen in the center of town or a park. Primarily a brown building, it also has traces of orange. It is one of the more unique designs in this collection. *C. Cope & Co. Tin Jobber* is a classic square New England building that was typical in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Signs on the building announce "All Manner Of Tin Sold" and "Tin Jobber Of Local Goods." Several tin items are grouped on the porch at the left side. A woman in the accessory *Tin Goods For Sale* looks over several of the jobber's items.



*Bennington Manor*, inspired by the community of the same name in Vermont, is a large residence painted in a soft blue color. It has unusual Z-shaped shutters and a large brick chimney centered on the roofline. The corresponding accessory, *New England Lamplighter*, is reminiscent of the similar piece that lasted seemingly forever in Dickens' Village. The last building, *Pawtucket Furniture Maker*, is basically the same height as the other three, but it looks more like a traditional New England residence than any of the others. Examples of the artisan's work are displayed on the porch, including a rocking chair and chest. Three chimneys grace the two-level roof. *Hope For The Future* is the coordinating accessory. It features a tradesman and woman customer who is admiring her new hope chest as she probably anticipates the next phase of her young life. Two general accessories are also present – the *Welcome To New England* sign and *Making Friends* in which two youngsters greet their newly created snowman.



## ON THE OPEN HOUSE TOUR #3

For the final third of our 2007-2008 open house tour, we had some firsts. For the first time, the Murphys introduced us to their Christmas holiday displays while the Hohnhorsts gave us our first opportunity to see their Christmas in the City. The Bramfelds presented a variety of villages, some Department 56 and some not, for our viewing pleasure.

At the seventh stop on the Open House Tour, Jim and Lauren Murphy greeted us with a whimsical yard filled with holiday lights and figures. Since Jim needs a train everywhere, there was a blow-up snowman train near the gate while Santa was arriving by plane and helicopter. Inside the house, guests were treated to a variety of North Pole displays. Due to Lauren's surgery, they were disappointed that they didn't get to do all of the things that they had planned plus they were getting ready right up to the last minute. Jim did his stair and elevation magic with a display around the Christmas tree. His use of elevations, arches, tunnels as well as juxtaposition of buildings near stairs drew the viewers' eyes into this display, which did include a train. One of Lauren's favorites was the Crayola display. She used crayons as paths and fences as well as Crayola boxes as backdrops behind elf accessories. Yes, there was a train. Lauren introduced a

new groundcover around her NP *Peanut Brittle Factory*, real peanut brittle, covered with lacquer to keep the ants away. Before the open house, Jim and I traded tips for displaying. He ran with my idea of using lots of mini lights and snowflake lights to outline buildings and areas. (Using lots of Tacky Wax; I'm sure.) Jim taught me that lint roller sheets are a fast and efficient way to cover holes or seams in Styrofoam. The sheets have a sticky side and are thin; so it's easy to place groundcover or trees over them. Also Jim used a very effective technique to add more light behind his displays. He shaped two lines of thin mountains from Styrofoam and placed lights between to give an Aurora Borealis effect. He and Lauren used small portable spotlights under the shelves of their revolving display trees to add more light to the displays. Finally, guests, who had not seen the Murphys' Halloween display in past years, were escorted by Jim to the outbuilding where Halloween is a permanent fixture.

At our eighth stop, Bill and Montse Hohnhorst bravely held their first open house for Club members. Their favorite things about the display, which was set up in the garage, were the facts that they had incentive to clean up the garage, they got to see their CIC pieces all together after years of collecting, and they had the "fun" of working together to create their first ever large display. The Hohnhorsts are going on a search for more vehicles in the coming year, because they felt that they didn't have enough. They are also going to give themselves more time when they create the next display, because as Bill said, "everything always takes longer than you imagine it would." Guests were pleased with the display table height. Bill and Montse made their own tables, using old hallow-core panel doors with 2x4 legs. They were able to place the platform at a

height where guests could actually look at the detail of the buildings and display. Plus it made it easier for the displayers to get under the table when doing the wiring. Guests also like being able to walk around the 3 sides of the display. I asked Bill and Montse if they used any new techniques, and Bill's response was, "Since this was our first display, everything was new." They were successful in using some old thin paneling for blocks and sidewalks. These were cut to the desired size and painted with gray house paint. The interior of the blocks were left white or cut out so the Styrofoam underneath would show. The Hohnhorsts also created their own electrical system. First, Bill cut holes in the door platform. Next he removed the plug from the building light cords. After threading them through the holes, he used electrical wire-nuts to attach six or seven of them together before attaching one plug end. This is a system that Bill plans to reuse. Sounds like Bill and Montse are planning to become Open House tour regulars.

Our final open house for the year was at the home of Art and Marge Bramfeld, where the Bramfelds charmed us with a variety of villages. Marge and Art were collecting villages long before they discovered Department 56. Guests were especially interested in accessories and older buildings that were not D56 pieces. One of my favorites is their paper village. Marge and Art added lighting around this village, which has no lights of its own, to trim the front and brighten the display. They used a similar technique around their Dickens display and added lighting to some non-lighted pieces to brighten their display. Marge's favorite part of her display was being able to squeeze in the *Tower Bridge of London*, but she wasn't satisfied with her river under the bridge.

*Continued on page 7*

**On the Open House Tour #3 continued**

She also wished that her display had had more depth so that she could have included additional pieces, especially her canals and countryside pieces. Maybe next season!

It was a great Open House Tour this year. I hope that you picked up some new techniques for your display and are planning your open house for the 2008-2009 Tour. *Winnie*



*Little Miss Sunshine*

*February 2008*

*The San Diego 56'ers suffered a terrible loss with the passing of Cheryl O'Connor on January 25, 2008. Our thoughts go out to Bob and the family.*

*Marilyn Oblinger is recovering at home from knee surgery. Marilyn is going to physical therapy a few times a week.*

*Sylvia Heitzmann had surgery this past week and is in room 443 at Scripps Memorial.*

*Sheri and Dave are new grandparents of baby Blake.*

**Meeting Programs**

As you can see on our Calendar of Events there are still four months without programs. If we don't line up a speaker or develop a program otherwise a couple of those meetings will become game nights. While game nights are popular they do give us the flexibility to schedule programs related to collecting or displaying. If you know of someone with that type of information willing to appear before us, or if there is a particular subject you would like covered, please let Lauren know.

Just so you are aware, arrangements are being made for the club to visit the train museum in Balboa Park as guests of the Three Railer Club. Lauren needs to know if we wish to make it a regular meeting night or as a separate field trip, so make your opinion known this month. Rumors are floating around that the train museum will be building a display based on Snow Village. If this is true they will be seeking help from us for finding buildings and setting up the display. I'm game, how about you?

**Road Trip!!!**

As serious displayers of our collections we are always looking for more accessories (people). Here is another possible source to check out.

*19th Annual West Coaster Toy Soldier and Miniature Figure Show. Sunday, March 2...9AM - 3PM at the Irvine Marriot Hotel (near John Wayne Airport) 18000 Von Karman Avenue, Irvine \$6 Admission Fee.*

*Co-sponsored by Old Toy Soldier Home of Vista*

*Although primarily a military show, we have usually managed to find a few odds and ends for our village.*

# San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285  
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month, February 27<sup>th</sup>

February						
					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	<b>27</b>	28	29	30



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



<b>SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS</b>		
<b>Calendar of Events - 2008</b>		
February	27	New Releases, Presented By Lisa Johnson
March	26	Make and Take
April	23	to be announced
May	28	Mid Year releases with Lisa Johnson
June	25	to be announced
July	23	to be announced
August	27	Power Point Presentation Of 2007 Open Houses / Pot Luck
September	24	Fifteenth Anniversary Party at Tom Hams Lighthouse Restaurant
October	22	Swap and Sell
November	19	to be announced
November	22	Lighting Up Lives Setup at Children's Hospital
December		Open Houses All Month... Schedule Will Be Published
January	3	Lighting Up Lives Take Down at Children's Hospital
<b>Please check the Calendar regularly. These programs are subject to change.</b>		
<b>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.</b>		