



Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”
Volume 15: Number 3 March 2008

The Year Ahead

The San Diego Fifty-Sixers have a very exciting year ahead of us. Six club members went on a National Council of Clubs (NCC) Caribbean cruise in February. In June, the 2008 NCC National D56 Convention is being held in Bloomington, Minn. Attendees have the opportunity to visit Stillwater (the *supposed* inspiration for The Snow Village), the Mall of America, and the Department 56 showroom. Over twelve San Diego Fifty-Sixers are planning to attend this convention. Contact our new NCC Representative, Bob O'Connor, for more information. Program Chairwoman, Lauren Murphy, has announced the programs for the rest of 2008. Highlights include a July meeting at the San Diego Model Train Museum in Balboa Park. Jim Murphy and I are members of the San Diego 3-Railers and we will be running our trains around the San Diego 3 Railers layout. Bring your train (O-gauge only), and, if you're really nice to the Trainmaster (Jim) he might let you run it. In September, we will be celebrating the club's 15th anniversary at Tom Ham's Lighthouse. Contact Lauren if you would like to help with preparation for the celebration. It's hard to believe that this club will be 15 years old. To me seems like just yesterday when Winnie came home from a local swap and sell with club information and an application form. Other program highlights include a swap and sell, some make and takes, games, mid-year intros, a pot luck with a slide show of the 2007 open houses, and presentations from our Canterbury Gardens and City Lights sponsors. It is going to be a very exciting year.

Congratulations to Dennis and Linda Morgan for winning the early bird membership contest. They can pick up their 25 raffle tickets from Winnie any time before July 1st 2008.

Department 56 was kind enough to send us a signed North Pole *Polar Bear Palace* to be raffled in memory of Cheryle O'Connor with all proceeds going to the American Diabetes Association. You can still purchase tickets from Winnie for the raffle during the March meeting. The drawing will be held at the end of the meeting.

We had a bit of a late start to our February meeting. Thanks to Marge Bramfeld for checking on the room schedule for the rest of the year. We are confirmed to have the room from 7:00 to 10:30PM. Since we can't get in the room until 7:00, we will push the start of our meeting from 7:15 to 7:30.

We'll be making and taking at this month's meeting. See you there.

Jon

MINDLESS MUTTERING...

...by Bob O'Connor

We started off the year with a little glitch when we lost our membership chair. We have fixed the glitch and now have Winnie Sage taking over on membership. As anyone who has been a member for very long knows, Winnie is a former school teacher and won't take any excuses from anybody, so if your dues are not paid by the end of the March you will be dropped like the proverbial hot potato.



This is not a year you want to miss, we have some wonderful programs planned and will be celebrating our fifteenth anniversary with a real blowout party. There are even some national events this year that if you can't attend yourself can enjoy vicariously through the dozen or so members who are planning to attend them. We will get some in depth reports from the attendees and hopefully will have lots of pictures as well. If you think you don't get much from belonging, I have a secret for you. Well, maybe it really isn't a secret, but it is known the more you put into something the more you will receive back. If you think you are being passed over, speak up, assert yourself, become known and go for your twenty minutes of fame. While you are at it you might as well take advantage of those who have already spoken up and are now giving or their time and knowledge for the advancement of our little collector's club.

Raffle Drawing – February 27, 2008

From Canterbury Gardens

Pointy Toed Shoemaker.....Esther Erdell

From Casual Living

Gift Certificate.....Claire Caldwell

From Christmas Mart

Gift Certificate.....Winnie Sage

From City Lights

Decorating Elsie.....Jim (Gym) Murphy
 Kringle Street Town Santa.....Sharon Swildens
 Checking the Ships Manifest.....Larry Oblinger
 Figurehead Carver.....Larry Oblinger

From Creative Memories

Album.....Karen Boynton

From Mole Hole

Independence Hall.....Esther Erdell

From SD 56er's

Santa's Tailor Shop.....Karen Boynton

Jon and Winnie Sage

Cottage of Bob Cratchet and Tiny Tim.....
Larry Oblinger

Anonymous

It's Almost Thanksgiving.....Bob O'Connor

Door Prizes Donated by: D56 Lisa Johnson:

Krinkles Bunny, Jon Sage; Acrylic Ice Castle, Marilyn Oblinger; Snowbaby Bunny, Millie Warner; Jack in the Box, Bill Hohnhorst; Celebrate Mug, Bob Dees; "Friendship" Plaque, Ester Erdell; "Dream It" Plaque Norma McColley; Burgundy Flower Purse, Janet Rodgers; Rudolph Snowbaby, Barbara Coon; Canine Note Cards, Annie Dallow; Beige Flower Purse, Jim Rodgers; "Thank You" Plaque, Karen Boynton; "Being You" Plaque Shirley Bechtel

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
<i>Village Views</i>	Bob O'Connor	760-789-3957



Little Miss Sunshine

March 2008

Terrific news, Sylvia Heitzmann is home from the hospital!

Two little goodies to report From Bill: Montse's birthday was Sunday, March 9th and his Mom's birthday was also the 9th and she would have been 92... Bill & Montse's anniversary is coming up on March 23rd.

Lisa Johnson turned 29 "again" on March 11th.

Bob and Dorothy Dee's went to Disneyland for 3 days with Jim & Lauren Murphy this past week. We drove our motor homes and stayed in an R.V. park about a mile from Disneyland. We enjoyed the time with Jim, Lauren and one of their grandsons, Jordan. This is the second year that we have taken advantage of Disney's "two-for" deal where you get to go to Disneyland one day and California Adventure the next day. This has gotten to be a much looked forward to" tradition".

The Murphy's continued on down to Oceanside where they met their fellow camping club friends.....including Bob O'Connor in his R.V.

For 3 1/2 weeks, beginning in mid January through the 1st week in February Elaine Foulger traveled in Egypt and Jordan.

She touched the Pyramids, cruised down the Nile River and enjoyed the hieroglyphics, carvings and paintings on the walls and ceilings in the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. While in Jordan Elaine had to remain in a hotel in Petra 2 extra days because of a snow storm. All the roads and airports were closed.

One of the thrills for Elaine was traveling in an Islamic country and hearing the morning call to prayer at 4:50AM.

Jon and Winnie Sage spent the last week traveling. They went to Big Bear, where they visited our new sponsor, The Christmas Mart. Then they went to Northern Arizona, where they took the Grand Canyon Railway out to the Grand Canyon. It was Jon's first time to see the Grand Canyon. It is truly awe inspiring. After returning to Williams, AZ on the train, they headed to Peoria, AZ for three days of Spring Training baseball games. Jon and Winnie had a great time!

For the make and take please bring your hot glue guns and scissors. If you have a special tree you wish to turn into a Halloween tree, bring it too. All other supplies will be provided. The instructors have been involved with this type of event before and are bound to get it right soon. Your participation will be reward enough for the efforts put forth by the instructors (it better be because they don't get paid otherwise).

Collectively Speaking

...BY **BOB DALLOW**

Onward, ever onward we go in our review of the new pieces in this year's villages. This month we'll take a look

at both **Dickens' Village** and **Christmas in the City**. With deference to age, we'll begin our trip in Merrie Olde England.

There are six new Dickens' buildings and eight new accessories. As has become the rule lately, each of the new buildings has a corresponding accessory. Therefore let's start with the "disconnected" accessories and get them out of the way. Every village gets a new sign. Veteran collectors don't need them, but newcomers are probably pleased, and they certainly are significant improvements over their predecessors. In this case a multi-colored brick wall supports the sign which has a small green evergreen attached to one side. The other accessory not directly related to a building is *Skating Couple*. The formally dressed animated twosome spins on small rink.



Barrow Manor (left) is a limited edition of 10,000 pieces. It is also a set of 2. In addition to the manor, there is a non-working porcelain fountain surrounded by topiary. The manor, which is a two story stone building with a red-tiled roof and double chimneys, drew its name from the maiden name of Charles Dickens' mother. An outdoor porch extends from the second floor. The coordinating accessory, *To The Manor Born*, features a well-to-do couple in their finery pushing a small sled which contains the heir apparent.

Next is *Peale's Bell Casting*, a rural building which has a firing hearth on the outside of the building. Bells adorn the walls, and a large pair of them is suspended from a second story winch to hoist them. A craftsman is depicted in the accessory *Finishing The Christmas Bell*.

Animation characterizes *Wilkenson & Kidd Saddlery* where a girl tests her saddle by riding her horse in a small circle. The owners' names are those of 1800 English saddle makers. The building is rather unusual in that it has a peaked roof to the left, and a traditional one on the main portion of the building. *Master & Apprentice* shows a young boy standing nearby while the craftsman works on his latest project.

Wellbourn Bros. Lanterns is accompanied by *Lanterns For Sale*, a street peddler offering lights to potential customers. The dab and waddle style architecture of the building also features distinctive awnings. Lanterns of various styles are visible, and the outside ones are LED lit.

A scrivener is a recorder of deeds and legal documents whose services were very necessary before Xerox entered our lives. *Ye Royal Scrivener* is pictured with his documents at a post box. The building, *Walter Key, Scrivener* is a brightly colored upscale three story structure.

Welcome to Chinatown! *Canton Tea Trading* is a uniquely designed Asian building with a bright red pagoda doorway. Ceramic lions and red lanterns add to the building's atmosphere. An authentically dressed woman serves tea to an English gent from her cart in *Tea Time*.

As we turn our attention to the **City**, we encounter four new buildings and five accessories. Once again, the “unrelated” accessory is a new sign. The modest brick sign with a tree and lantern is attractive but not necessary. There are already more signs than fire trucks.

The Regal Ballroom (right) is a collectors’ edition limited edition of 7,000. The larger ground floor supports an upper story and a large balcony on which animated figures dance and move around. It is an imposing building made of stone with ornate carvings. A banner proclaims that the facility is hosting the “56th Annual Charity Ball.” What a coincidence! *A Shot For Your Fans Please* depicts a member of the paparazzi greeting a regally attired couple. It is reminiscent of 1997’s *Big Smile For The Camera*.



An interior scene depicts a grand piano in *Hammerstein Piano Co.*, but this is not the most eye-catching piano. Suspended from a hoist, another piano is being lifted to the top of the three story building. Made of brick it is an impressive structure. The seemingly unrelated accessory is *Bucket Lunch*, a man with lunchbox and thermos enjoying his noon repast. Hopefully, he’ll opt to sit other than under the suspended piano.

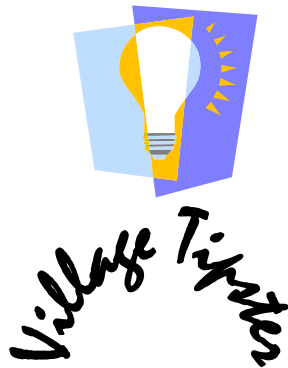
American Diner is a great addition to the City. It certainly fills a void that has existed. It has a highly detailed complete lit interior scene. This prefabricated replica of 1930s diners is, according to its sign, air conditioned. In an effort to attract business, a billboard man attempts to convince a young customer of the value of *Free Soda For You*.

The final new City piece is not truly new. *Ferrara Bakery & Café* was an early release last fall to Fortunoff in New York. It is a representation of the New York bakery, a delight for cheesecake lovers since 1892. Made entirely of brick with lighted interior scenes and fire escapes, it will enhance city streets. *Ferrara Bakery Cart* can be stationed outside the building for customers as they sprint to the nearby subway lines.

WHAT’S OLD?

When last year ended, we failed to take our usual look at the list of pieces that are the oldest current buildings and accessories after the November retirements. Here’s that list...

<u>Collection</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Accessory</u>
Snow Village	Shelly’s Diner (1999)	Village Phone Booth (1992)
Dickens’ Village	Scrooge & Marley (2000)	Caroling With Cratchits (1996)
New England Village	Apple Valley School (1996)	The Perfect Tree (2000)
Alpine Village	Bergermeister’s House (2004)	Sisters of the Abbey (1999)
Christmas in the City	Molly O’Brien’s Irish Pub (1999)	Central Park Carriage (1989)
North Pole	Yummy Gummy Gumdrops (2004) Christmas Critters Pets (2004)	Mickey Builds A Snowman (2003)



VILLAGE ABCs – Addendum

In November, we finally finished going through the alphabet from A to Z, but, along the way, I discovered that there were certain topics that had been forgotten. I'd think of a subject only to remember that I was already passed that letter. So for the next few months, I will be writing about those forgotten subjects as well as updating information from earlier articles.

B

In displaying as in the theater, the backdrop is part of the setting. It helps to tell us what is going on as it frames the display and focuses our attention to the setting. In this article, we will consider backdrops that I have seen or used. With limited space, I won't discuss all possibilities but will try to include as many as I can.

Department 56 got into the backdrop business in 1997 when it introduced *Blue Skies Backdrop* and *Starry Night Sky Backdrop*. Both were current until 2000. Each was a roll of glossy paper with photographic quality. Later, in 2001 and 2002, the company introduced *Winter Scene Backdrop*, *A Christmas Eve Flight Backdrop*, *North Pole Backdrop*,

and *Halloween Scene*. These were hinged scenes that worked well with small displays. Fontanini produces similar backdrops for its nativity sets, which can be used with our Holy Land. For larger displays, a company, called Village Wallscapes (www.villagewallscapes.com), produces stock canvas panels up to 36" by 24" as backdrops. They will also create custom orders or multiple panels, which can be used together to create longer lengths.

Creating backdrops can be as simple as edging your display with tall trees, garland, or floral picks. Mountains are great backdrops. At recent Murphy and Brown open houses, we saw thin mountains with lighting between to give the mountains an aurora borealis glow. Besides their mountains, the Browns created huge "presents," using Styrofoam, wrapping paper, and ribbon, which they hung behind their North Pole display and on the skirting. In the past, we have seen jigsaw puzzles with lights inserted as backdrops for the Storey's displays. For one open house, Mary Marshall created a display that was an exact replica of the Dickens' Village jigsaw puzzle that was framed above it. I also attempted to recreate the scene from Thomas Kincaid's North Pole Circle in one of my earlier displays.

We have seen many displays that have painted backgrounds, like those we use for our Lighting Up Lives displays. Cathy Weber, who created the LUL backdrops, produces similar backgrounds for her own displays. This year, the Bechtels hung a painted cityscape canvas behind their Christmas in the City display and used an enlarged drawing of a cityscape

behind their bridge display. When the Sages painted their family room walls to serve as a backdrop for their displays in the 1990s, we chose simple blue walls, nothing special, but it was easy.

On a trip to New England in 1996, we visited a store selling Department 56. Its display had a backdrop of dark blue fabric with white twinkle lights behind it. We tried that technique the following year. It looked great but was a lot of work. Now you know why we started painting the walls blue. Sometimes it is possible to find fabric with printed scenes of the seasons. These or yardage with patterns, such as leaves, presents, wreathes, or other seasonal objects, can serve as backdrops, providing a theme for your display. Like fabric, wallpapers can serve as themed backdrops for displays, or they can be a neutral frame, where color, rather than patterns, is your focus. Over the years, members have created their own wallpaper to use as background. Bob Dallow had an enlargement made of a New York cityscape. This let the viewers know that his was Christmas in the "Big Apple" City.

Mirrors make an effective backdrop. While framing the display, they expand the scope by doubling the size. Mirrors also give viewers a chance to see the backsides of the buildings and accessories. The Sages and the Dallows have had success with the use of mirrors.

I hope this has you thinking about what your backdrops will be, but remember some displayers use no backdrop at all.

WINNIE

World Wide Villaging

While cruising the web I stumbled upon a very interesting site having to do with villages. While it doesn't limit itself to D56 (there is also Lemax, Spooky Town and several others) the information and pictures about displaying is extensive. If you want to explore for yourself go to <http://buildingnewworlds.ning.com>. Members of this site are from Sweden, the Netherlands, other European countries and Australia as well as the U.S. While I still think our members do the best job, these guys (and girls) are good and we might learn a few things from them.

Upcoming NCC Events

Bloomington, MN The NCC is holding a convention in June, 2008 in Bloomington, MN. This is the perfect time for all Department 56 enthusiasts to meet and greet some of the artists that create your favorite village and ask them how they do what they do. More information can be found on their website www.ncc2008convention.com

Montreal, Quebec, Canada Village Lamplighters of Québec (Canada) announces the next gathering in Canada will be in Montreal on May 15 – 17, 2009. Mr. Marc Chouinard has accepted the president's post for this gathering. The website is <http://www.lamplighters.ca> or <http://www.lamplighters.ca/index-en.html> (English text)

San Antonio, Texas Plans are moving forward for the Region 8 Roundup. It will be held August 20 - 23, 2009 at the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade in San Antonio, Texas. Dust off your witches' hat and brooms because the theme is Halloween and we are planning a Spooktacular time for y'all. We hope to have our web site updates soon. For more information contact Chairwoman Linda Cook at 512-255-9982 or email lindacook@sbcglobal.net

San Diego, California Plans are being made to hold a 2010 gathering in San Diego at the Murphy ranch. All events will be under tents erected just for this event. Attendees will be on their own to pitch their own tents or camp out under the moon. Side trips will be made to selected San Diego Fifty Sixer's homes for open house tours. Shopping trips to Canterbury Gardens and City Lights will highlight the gathering. For those not driving to the gathering, bus passes may be purchased from SDCTD. All seminars will be under the tents as well as the merchant sales area. The banquet will be the now famous Murphy Pit Bar-B-Que, paper plates and plastic forks will be sold at the Lake House. I have it from good authority the saloon will be open for those who wish to be intoxicated by Halloween. An optional post gathering trip is planned to the Christmas Store at Big Bear Lake with a stop at Casual Living in San Bernardino. The dates are not yet firm but we are trying to avoid winter snow, summer blazing heat, and fall Santa Anna Winds or maybe we can arrange for a hotel instead. www.makeithappen.com

One of the above notices is not true. If you can guess which one it is you could win a chance to make it become a fact. Until the San Diego gathering is a confirmed event Lauren Murphy is acting chairperson. It will only take a little effort from each of us to make her position official. We have an entire nation full of collectors who are just waiting for an excuse to come to San Diego. Let's give them a good one!

San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the
fourth Wednesday of the month,
March 26th

March						
						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					

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



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.

The **San Diego Fifty Sixers** are members of the
National Council of 56 Clubs



SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS		
Calendar of Events - 2008		
March	26	Make and Take
April	23	City Lights Presents the Ever Popular Brian Young
May	28	Mid Year releases with Lisa Johnson
June	25	Canterbury Gardens Presentation
July	23	Train Museum With San Diego The Three Railer Club
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 / Panel Discusion
November	19	Make and Take
November	22	Lighting Up Lives Setup at Children's Hospital
December		Open Houses All Month... Schedule Will Be Published
January	3	Lighting Up Lives Setup at Children's Hospital
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.		

**The Cookie Elves for the March meeting are:
Marge Bramfeld, Janet Rodgers, Annie Dallow, Sherri Struthers**