



Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”
Volume 15: Number 4 April 2008

“Come On Down!”

The Price is Right for club members that attend our monthly meetings. For just \$1 a ticket (6 for \$5) members can buy a chance to win one of our raffle prizes. Lately our raffle table has been overflowing with a large assortment of prizes. Where do all these prizes come from you ask? Mostly they come from our friendly Department 56 retailers that support our club. We have two sponsors, Canterbury Gardens and City Lights, which have supported us every month for the last 15 years. (15 X 11 = 165 prizes!) We have our great friends at The Mole Hole in San Clemente and Casual Living in San Bernardino. We have two new sponsors this year, The Christmas Mart at Big Bear Lake and Unique Gifts and Collectables in Temecula. Millie Warner and Creative Memories always bring something special. In addition to all of that, the club provides a prize or two, and there is usually something from a club member. Plus Department 56 (Lisa Johnson) provides us with door prizes. I have talked to many members of other clubs, and none come close to having the support we get from our sponsors. Just think about it. Not only do they contribute to our raffle each and every month of the year, but they also help with our monthly program, and are always more than willing to provide us with additional support for special projects.

I belong to another local collector's club. They are just as fanatic about their collections as we are about ours, only their lighted buildings travel on 3 rails. Last month I attended their monthly meeting. It was basically a business meeting. No program, no raffle, not much fun.

So when you win a raffle prize you will notice a thank you card provided with your prize. Please take the time to fill it out and send it to the sponsor. I know they appreciate getting the cards. It is also important to identify yourself as a San Diego Fifty-Sixer whenever you purchase items from our sponsors. We want them to know we support them as much as they support us.

We can all thank Department 56, Melinda Seegers, and Lisa Johnson for donating the North Pole “Polar Bear Factory” for our special raffle. We raised \$660 which will be sent to The American Diabetes Association in memory of Cheryle O'Connor.

It will be the Dallow show at the April meeting. Annie will be filling in for me since Winnie and I will be cruising through the Panama Canal, and Bob will be providing the entertainment with some more of his great games. Thanks Bob and Annie.

Jon

MINDLESS MUTTERING...

...by Bob O'Connor

What is it about collecting little lit buildings that is so addicting? One would think once you have a few buildings to place in a conspicuous place and call it a village that would be enough. Why in the world would someone continue buying more and more until the very storage of them becomes a problem? Then go out and buy trees and accessories that cost more than the buildings themselves creating even more of a storage fiasco? Find the answer to that, bottle it and you could be very rich.



I think there are several reasons. In many homes I see displays that bring back memories of earlier times, or of places visited. There are those displays that create places that are real only in our imaginations. We try to make them so realistic one would wish to shrink down and move in to what can only be a better world than that in which we find ourselves. We even make up worlds so fantastic, with so much make believe that only the children (or the children within us could believe in it). We bring to life a perfect world, if only in our living rooms and only for a few months. We purchase more and different buildings and accessories because only through growth and change does a world survive.

Those are some reasons, you may have others. My excuse is: my wife made me do it!!!

Raffle Prizes

Anonymous

Bald Eagle Nesting.....Roxanne Hudson

Canterbury Gardens

Knickerbockers Flag CompanyEsther Erdell

Casual Living

\$50.00 gift certificate.....Michele Brown

Christmas Mart

\$25.00 gift certificate.....Donavan Murphy

City Lights

Elegant Christmas Topiaries.....Janet Rodgers

Juniper Shrubs.....Sherri Struthers

Scotch Pines.....Joe Innecken

Creative Memories

Album with adn'l pages.....Roxanne Hudson

Mole Hole

Elves Trade School.....Roxanne Hudson

SD 56ers

Pumpkin Water Tower.....Betty Roberts

Unique Gifts and Collectables

\$25.00 gift certificate.....Mary Marshall

Someone who will remain nameless forgot the door prizes, but thanks to the generosity of the Dallows, the Sages and someone call anonymous, the follow door prizes were won: Five raffle tickets , Sherri Ramsey: Santa Fence, Marge Bramfeld: Clocks, Norma McColley: Krinkles Bunny, Jon Sage: Five raffle tickets, Betty Roberts: Letter Opener, Winnie Sage

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



Little Miss Sunshine

April 2008

Jim Murphy has once again been selected member of the month for the San Diego 3 Railer Club. Jim has built a "spring park" module for the SD3R layout located in Balboa Park.

I have good news, states Claire Caldwell." Our 2nd granddaughter was born March 27, 2008 @ 6:09 pm." Sabrina Zoya Caldwell was 5lbs 7oz and 17 inches tall and has a full head of hair. Jim and Claire are overjoyed with her arrival!

Ed Oatman has been under the weather. I was told 30% of his heart is functioning. He was to have surgery but it was cancelled. Ed, we all wish you well!



Our last meeting was sort of successful. I say sort of because we had two make and takes going on simultaneously but still only had about 30% participation in the hands on part. Granted most of the remaining members at least looked in on what was going on. Even having the library open did not keep everyone's attention. On the other hand there was quit a bit lively conversation going on by the non participants so everyone had a good time, or so it seems. I think we should get some feedback and really discuss what we should have for our next make and take. We need to cover a subject that is of interest to the majority of members.

Our April meeting will be running pretty much on its own. President Jon Sage will be on a cruise he and Winnie planned months ago. Our vice president, Lauren Murphy is taking advantage of a last minute special deal to cruise on out of here on the meeting night. So while the cats are away the mice will play. We will have a game night to rival the ones they will be having on their cruises and don't have to take any Dramamine. Like game nights in the past Bob Dallow will have several fun, village related contests, to test our knowledge while giving us the opportunity to win prizes.



The cookie elves for April are: Millie Warner, Michele Brown, Lauren Murphy, and Sharon Swildens.

We always thank the cookie elves, and rightly so, but how often do we thank Mary Marshall for bringing the coffee every month? How about this month? Make a point to come up and thank her for a job well done.



Collectively Speaking

...BY BOB DALLOW

It's time to wrap up our tour of new village pieces. This month we'll complete the trip with a stop in Snow Village

followed by a quick overview of the General Village Accessories. But – in reality – the journey isn't quite over yet. There's more! Next month is May, and that means we'll be looking at the midyear additions, a minimal list compared to the winter releases, but it's one more thing for you and your Visa card balance to anticipate.

Snow Village introduces nine new buildings and eleven accessories. As has been the trend in each of the villages, there are new signs, and almost every building has an accessory specifically intended to coordinate with it. Let's begin with the three accessories that are not so designated. The new sign is a stone wall with the slogan "Our Town – Make It Yours" with a bluebird atop the wall, and a pine tree growing next to it. A second entrance is the opening to Snow Village's garish neighborhood – the *Christmas Lane Lit Gate*. Lit Christmas trees are at each end of a garland-decorated white picket fence which has an archway in its center. The annual *Santa Comes to Town* accessory features Santa holding a puppy aloft while a little girl and the pup's mother look on.

Speaking of Christmas Lane, there is a new building – *The Gingerbread House*; three large gingerbread men are arrayed on the ground in front of the building. A miniature one appears on the roof, and all the shutters have gingerbread cutouts in them. A stone chimney dominates the front of the building, which is also adorned by lighted lawn candles. The corresponding accessory is *Ginger's House*. Ginger is the family dog, and her "house" has lights on the roof, a large gingerbread man near the door, and shutter cutouts as well.

Sam's Butcher Shop is the only building without a designated accessory. It is a single story building with large windows on both sides of the central door. Interior signs are visible inside the shop which proclaims "Choice Beef" and "Best Veal." If you're looking for a good vintage to accompany your steak, the red at *Chateau Valley Winery* (left) would be an excellent selection. The Spanish architecture building has no snow on the roof. Champagne testing takes place on the upper balcony of the triangular structure, and wine tasting occurs on the patio. *Ready For Picking* is an elderly farmer with grapes in his cart. His feet are obscured, so it is not possible to see whether they are purple or not.



If you prefer to have a malt product with your meal, stop in at *Yuengling Tavern* which manufactures beer of the same name. Located in Pennsylvania, it is the oldest continuously owned family brewery in the nation, beginning in 1829. A beer garden at the side of the building is under a towering replica of the company's beer can. This will make an excellent corner piece in your village. The accessory, *The Yeungling Champs* hold aloft the trophy the brewery sponsored team won.

Frost University provides the first higher education opportunities for residents of the ceramic village. A white brick building, festooned with holiday decorations, its slogan "Education" (not particularly clever) appears over the second story windows. This is a limited edition of 12,000 pieces. The accessory *Homework Can't Wait* depicts a jock engrossed in his studies although he would rather be at practice. A determined teacher helps him to set his priorities.

A giant lit sign of a pink flamingo is half of the two piece set *The Flamingo Motel*. The motel itself is a small one story building with only two rooms visible from the front. The related accessory *Over The Threshold* depicts a young groom carrying his equally young bride into their motel room. A few years later as their family grows, their offspring can go to *Little Sunshine Daycare*, a small green house that has obviously been converted to a business. An example of the young population is seen in *Nursery School Outing* where a teacher takes four of her charges for a sled ride.

The trailer park is growing! In 2003, Department 56 introduced *Lot 56, Christmas Court*, a structure that has appeared innumerable times in at least one display. They now have neighbors as *Lot 57* has arrived. The new release has lit greenery and garlands and looks less like a vehicle for the road than does its predecessor. If you're building a mini community, it obviously needs a sign. *Welcome to Christmas Court* announces your arrival at your destination. A child stands next to the sign with its red bows.

Finally the Fall Harvest Subseries has a new building and a new accessory. These pieces could appear in an autumn scene, or they might be incorporated into Halloween displays. *Scarecrow Harvest Festival* (right) and *His Name Will Be Pumpkinhead* are replete with pumpkins, scarecrows, and fall leaves. The building can't seem to make up its mind as to whether it is a house or a barn. It does have an attractive interior sign featuring autumn items for sale.



GENERAL VILLAGE ACCESSORIES:

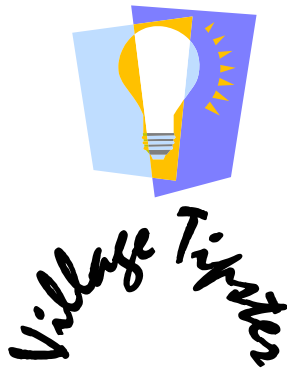
Animated Pieces (1) – New Animated Skating Pond

General Pieces (14) – Lit Acrylic Yard Decorations, Snowman Watertower, Village Straight Fence [S/6], Village Steps, Village Holiday Boughs [S/12], Potted Spruce Tops [S/4], Potted Poinsettias [S/4], Village Post Box, Village Metal Mail Boxes [S/4], Village Stop Signs [S/2], Village Parking Meters [S/4], Paws and Refresh, Real Plastic Snow, Slate Stone Corners [S/8]

Lights (5) – Fifty-Six Street Lights [S/2], Santa Street Lights [S/2], Village Main Street Stoplights [S/2], Village Corner Stoplights [S/2], Holiday Street Lamps [S/2]

Trees (7) – First Frost Trees [S/3], Lit Tinsel Trees – White, Finial Trees [S/2], Frosted Sisal Trees, Large [S/2] – 14" & 16", Frosted Sisal Tree – 22", Wintergreen Trees [S/3] – 6", 8", & 10", Classic Tinsel Trees – Bright Green [S/3]

Coming Up: The May issue of the newsletter will have another "take home" puzzle. Solve it, and return it prior to the June Board meeting. Watch for details next month.



VILLAGE ABCs - Addendum

B

Today we're going to take a look at bases. No, not first base, second base or third base. Although you know that this time of year, I talk a lot about those bases, too. We'll consider bases, foundations, for our displays. Your base can be a shelf, a mantel, or plywood with Styrofoam covering. Sometimes, you can find a base that has already been created for you. Here, we will take a look at a variety of bases.

Let's begin with Department 56 creations. In 1996, D56 issued *Revolving Turntable* and *Animated Accessory Track*. Both could be used as a base for buildings and accessories on a table or as a part of a larger display. Both retired in 1999. The *Craggy Cliff Platform* was available from 1999 to 2003 with space for a cabin or some campers. *Village Mountain High* arrived in 2001 with some elevations to support buildings and accessories. Later, in 2002 and 2003, the company

introduced *Sounds of the North Woods* and *Sounds of the City*, respectively. Each module was automated with sounds appropriate to the setting and space for about one building and some accessories. With the exception of the *Animated Accessory Track*, all of these bases were too small to accommodate more than a single building.

During our recent open house tour, the subject of bases came up at the Dallow's home, because they have some lovely modular bases that they use in their City. These bases were made by Village Monument Co., which is no longer in business, but you may be able to find some of these on the secondary market, on-line or at gatherings' Swap and Sells. The Village Monument units were created to hold from one to six buildings. In the latest issue of *Village D-Lights*, there is an ad for Dept. 56 Display Platform Bases by Kathy. The web-site is www.dept56displayplatformbases.com. Kathy's platforms are custom-made, and the web-site shows lots of pictures of her work. Since each is custom made, you could order units to accommodate any number of buildings. While they looked well done, I thought that they might be a bit pricey, but it depends upon what you are willing to pay: so that you don't have to make them yourself.

If you are looking for furniture pieces that were built specifically with village displaying in mind, that's not as easy as it used to be. At one time, you could find lamps with

wooden bases that were created for village vignettes. I no longer see them advertised, but you might be able to find them on the secondary market. Anyone who has visited Sylvia Heitzmann's Dickens display has seen and admired her display cabinet. Her cabinet allows her to keep her village up all year without visits from her cats. The cabinet was produced by a company called Collectible Displays, Inc. They were advertising in collectible magazines through the end of 2007. A visit to their web-site states that they are stopping production due to rising costs, but they did have some cabinets still available.

Other bases for your display include the rotating, shelved trees produced by Chick Storey. His bases provide multiple layers for many buildings and accessories. Other companies are producing multi-tiered trees, but Chick's are the only ones that I've seen that rotate.

My own favorite bases continue to be those plywood and Styrofoam constructions. They give me the chance to form the exact shape and size that I want. Plus Styrofoam is still the easiest material for pinning and hot gluing down wires, accessories, trees, and shrubs.

'Til we touch bases next month, stay safe and well.

WINNIE

Changing face

When I first came to a meeting of the San Diego Fifty Sixers I came reluctantly, I was literally dragged to the darn thing. My interest at the time was at best as an observer. I did however observe, and what I saw was a bunch of very friendly folks who enjoyed their collections of little lit houses. I missed a few of the meetings (I was still bowling on Wednesday nights) but on my next opportunity (?) to attend I came more willingly remembering several interesting people from the previous one. I remember the club was planning its fifth anniversary party and announced a contest of decorated center pieces for the tables at the party. Well being the competitive sort, and having just that year taken over building the display at home, I was hooked. I took a corner piece (about a foot or so square) from the corner of my display at home, made the lights battery powered and brought it to the party. The rest is, as they say, history.

In those early days (for me) the most popular village was Dickens with Christmas in the City and Snow Village battling for second. If North Pole was there at all it was just a weird upstart little collection and Halloween was none existent. My memories kind of merge into a fog but I know we did Snow Village as our primary village and I made an "ocean" beyond which North Pole made it's appearance with accompanying seals and polar bears. Some where in the ensuing time line I was given Seasons Bay as "MY" village because I wanted to make a more permanent display with trains as the focal point, and the scale of Seasons Bay was more realistic. It's still in the works but I keep getting sidetracked.

Snow Village has become the most popular village with the first non Christmas based village Halloween the fastest growing one. Snow Village seems to be holding its own while the Heritage Villages are fading fast. Little Alpine, Quaint New England, archaic Dickens and bustling Christmas in the City are in need of an infusion to keep up. The long time collectors are just running out of room and the idea of having a complete collection is losing popularity. The only thing to do is attract new collectors who may miss their homes (England, New York, or New England) or happen to like the Alps and strange names.

I have wandered all over the place on this page, but the point I was trying to lead up to is the changing face of the San Diego Fifty Sixers. Without offending anyone (because I am in the same boat) the club has become long in tooth. We have become comfortable and complacent with the status quo and either Mr. Status or Mr. Quo will be our undoing. We need to seriously endeavor to invite, entice, or kidnap some new members, including younger ones, to carry on with our future. Unlike some ball teams I could name I am not willing to trade any experienced players but would like to see the line up expanded to make room for some rookies.

Unfortunately I don't have the solution. What we have done in the past isn't working, we need some new ideas. Maybe we could increase our presence on the internet or put up a billboard. Maybe skywriting over the beach or an ad on the baseball scoreboard would work. I solicit you to come up with ideas we can apply. The only bad idea is the one not mentioned.

San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the
fourth Wednesday of the month,
April 23rd

April						
		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			

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		
April	23	Game Night With Doctor "D"
May	28	Mid Year releases with Lisa Johnson
May	31	Event at City Lights With Scott Enter Signing
June	25	A Canterbury Gardens Presentation
July	23	Train Museum with the San Diego Three Railer Club
August	19	Remake Backdrops at Murphy Ranch / 7AM / Pot Luck Lunch
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 Discussion
November	19	Program to be Announced
November	22	Lighting Up Lives Setup at Children's Hospital
December		Open Houses All Month... A Schedule Will Be Published
January	3	Lighting Up Lives Takedown 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.		

It's game night;



bring one of



the instruments seen here.

