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Newsletter of the Arcadia Historical Society

President's Message: **Out and About in the Community**

Fall 2018

Ed Andersen Presents: *"Lucky" Baldwin: The Man Who Was Never Licked*

On Saturday morning, September 29th, Ed Andersen, Arcadia Historical Society's Community Relations, presented little known facts about Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin, the founder of the City of Arcadia, in his presentation, *"Lucky" Baldwin: The Man Who Was Never Licked*. The event held for *Saturday Morning Coffee* at the Floretta K. Lauber Education Center drew a crowd of over 60 attendees, including Steve Baker, Monrovia's City Historian, and Eugene Moy with the Historical Society So Cal Chinese. One surprise was a clip from the TV show, *Death Valley Days*, showing a reenactment of how "Lucky" Baldwin was able to obtain the Santa Anita Rancho and begin his legacy that is with us today.

Annual Moon Festival

The Arcadia Historical Society had the privilege of participating in the Annual Moon Festival celebration sponsored by the City of Arcadia and the Arcadia Chinese Association at City Hall Lawn on Saturday evening, September 29th. AHS provided the craft supplies, with the Arcadia Civic Youth Council assisting children who created peacock fans and bunny fans. At one point, there were twelve children, along with a parent or two, gathered around the table. AHS and ACYC members could barely keep up with the demand. However, every child (and a parent or two) walked away with his or her own masterpiece, like the Garrido family on the right.



Downtown Halloween Festival

This event was held on Saturday, October 29th from 11:00 AM until 6:00 PM. AHS posted a large official map of the City of Arcadia from 1923, asking participants to place a star on the map of where they currently reside. Some attendees had a

challenging time in finding their street because back in 1923, their street was not in existence. Areas of Arcadia were working chicken ranches. It was also interesting to find streets like Front Street and Eleventh Avenue, which no longer exist; Las Tunas Drive was actually named Azusa Road. Lee Shimmin shared information on the Thoroughbred Racing Walk of Champions. The Arcadia Civic Youth Council provided a craft table in which children could create what they wanted out of colored paper, stencils and crayons. Becky Chen and Justin Chen (above) worked with the young attendees.

-Karen Hou

Marker and Memories

The *Baldwin Lake* “History Lives Here” marker dedication was held on Thursday, September 13, 2018 at 5:00 pm at the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, 301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia, California. The marker is situated along the roadside, on the east side of Baldwin Lake, directly across from the Queen Anne Cottage.

Mayor Pro-Tem April Verlatto reflected on her own personal visits to the Arboretum as a child, and now, with her own children. City Council member Peter Amundson also spoke of the importance of the Arboretum to his family and how they have enjoyed its beauty over the years. Sandra Maravilla, from the office of County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, presented a certificate to congratulate both the Los Angeles Arboretum Foundation and the Arcadia Historical Society on the newly installed Marker. Richard Schulhof, CEO of the Arboretum, detailed some facts about the importance of the lake and its designation on the National Register of Historic Places. CEO Schulhof added that people “will be standing in line to read the marker,” and learn the history of this unique place.



Descendants Dana Baldwin and Margaux Viera, the great-great-great granddaughter of Elias J. “Lucky” Baldwin, were on hand for the dedication. Jim Considine, Historic Marker Chairman, and Dan Foliart both emceed the event.

Pictured, left to right: Mayor Pro-Tem April Verlatto; Laura Janssen, architectural historian with Historic Resources Group; Sandy Snider, chairman of the Arboretum Foundation’s Baldwin Lake Task Force and on the AHS Historical Marker Committee; Bill Ellinger, preservation architect of Ellinger & Associates; and Lauragene Swenson with the Arboretum’s Los Voluntarios group.

The creative team responsible for the marker’s design and installation also attended the dedication. Alex Cruz, Senior Designer, and Dan Sargent, Installation, Construction & Sales, from B & H Signs, Monrovia, California beamed with pride at the latest of their creations. Dan even showed the blister he got on his right hand digging up the soil that “was as hard as a rock.” All AHS “History Lives Here” markers throughout Arcadia have been designed by B & H Signs retaining the uniform style, color and overall presentation.

Leslie S. Ziff, President of the Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society was on hand for the dedication, as well as Monrovia’s City Historian, Steve Baker.



Pictured, left to right, Alex Cruz; Jenn Bonura, co-owner of B&H Signs; Karen Hou, AHS President; and Dan Sargent, co-owner of B&H Signs.

Mystery Dinner Recreates True Kidnapping with a Few Flourishes

The Arcadia Historical Society hosted its second Mystery Dinner at the Gettle Estate (aka Prince Erik Gardens) on November 10.

It was in May of 1934 that Oil Millionaire William F. Gettle moved his family from Beverly Hills to Arcadia when he purchased the Clara Baldwin Stocker estate. A gala event was held to christen the restored home. It was at this event that Gettle and a friend of his were kidnapped. Miraculously, the friend was able to escape, but Gettle was nowhere to be found. Authorities set up roadblocks to prevent a "clean getaway."

AHS had its dinner guests try to figure out WHO-DUN-IT with suspects interspersed throughout the dining area. Detective Sheets played by Alex Uribe interrogated the possible conspirators, and dinner guests joined in by reading clues placed at their table. Humor and surprise had the guests laughing and crying in their seats. At the end of the evening, the culprit was discovered and arrested. And William Gettle returned to the dinner unscathed.

In 1934, William F. Gettle was found in a vacated home Up-For-Sale in La Crescenta, six days after his kidnapping, physically unharmed.

Sandi McQuilkin not only wrote the script for the event, but she and her team catered it as well. Santa Anita Gardens Catering put out a Charcuterie Table that was to "die for," but everyone survived the evening's dinner and event.

The Arcadia Historical Society is pleased that the proceeds from this event will go to benefit the Queen Anne Cottage Restoration project.



Left to right: Jan Shimmin starred as Mrs. Gettle, Lee Shimmin played William Gettle and Lisa Walton was Mrs. Gettle's nurse. All received awards for their performances.



Arcadia Police Explorers assisted as Serving Staff and played their part as "undercover security."



A photo of the restored Clara Baldwin Stocker home was featured as a centerpiece on the elegantly appointed dining tables.

Members of the Arcadia Chinese Association played their roles as dinner guests. Left to right: Karen Hou, Francine Chiu, Susan Guo, Edward Wong, Dorothy Wong, Jamie Lee, Arnold Chien, Emily Chien and Winnie Li.



Racing Greats From Start to Finish

On August 3rd of this year, Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin was inducted into the National Museum of Racing & 2018 Hall of Fame as a Pillar of the Turf. Baldwin was a prominent owner/breeder of thoroughbreds in Southern California, opened the original Santa Anita racetrack and championed four American Derby winners including Emperor of Norfolk, Hall of Famer 1988.

Accepting for Mr. Baldwin were sisters Margaux Viera and Heather Gibson, great-great-great granddaughters of Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin. In addressing the audience, Margaux Viera said, "Elias J. 'Lucky' Baldwin was a man of great strength and power. He once said, 'If a man is determined, he can do anything in the world.' Baldwin had a deep love of horses and animals. We are proud to honor the racing legacy of a great man, Elias J. 'Lucky' Baldwin. Like a thoroughbred, his desire to win was powered by his love of the sport." Heather Gibson concluded by saying, "Thank you for celebrating this amazing time." (A video of this event can be viewed by going to www.arcadahistoricalociety.org home page, under RACING MUSEUM HONORS STRUB, BALDWIN.)

Santa Anita Park founder Dr. Charles Strub was also inducted along with Elias J. Baldwin as a "Pillar of the Turf." Strub was hailed as one of "the masterminds" behind the state-of-the-art Santa Anita Park, which opened on Christmas day, 1934.

The National Museum of Racing was founded in 1950 by a group of individuals with prominence in the sport of thoroughbred racing. The Museum was established in Saratoga Springs, New York, home to the oldest thoroughbred racetrack in America, which opened on August 2, 1864. In early 1955, it was decided that the museum would establish a Hall of Fame. Jockey George Woolf was included in the inaugural class of inductees that year. Woolf won 721 races, including the Preakness in 1936 and the Santa Anita Derby in 1945, and rode Seabiscuit, Alsab, Challedon and Whirlaway.

A Diary of a Great Race!



This is from my diary of the 2018 National Racing Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Reception at Saratoga Springs, New York.

My husband Ric and I flew into Albany and spent the night there. My mother and sister Heather flew separately and stayed in Saratoga Springs. The induction ceremony was to take place the following morning in Saratoga Springs at Fasig Tipton (oldest thoroughbred auction house in the US). That night in my hotel room I contemplated my acceptance speech. I thought to myself that I had to get the wording of the speech perfect. Something told me to rip it up and keep it short and sweet. Maybe Baldwin preferred things that way!

In the morning we headed on our way to Saratoga Springs through very heavy rain with low to zero visibility. It was all adrenaline. Once we arrived at the auction house it was very fast paced. The large auction room was filled with generations of the horse community. I met John Phillips of Darby Dan Farm who said to me, "You must be so nervous flying here and being in this room full of all these people you don't know." I was! The ceremony was amazing and the National Racing Museum & Hall of Fame did a fantastic job with all of the inductee tribute videos

After the ceremony was over, my family and I headed to downtown Saratoga Springs where we ate at Max London's eatery. This seemed to be a popular spot with most of the racing crowd. We ended up sitting next to a famous trainer who was a Hall of Famer from Toronto.



Heather Gibson (left) and Margaux (right)

That evening we all attended a reception held at the National Racing Museum in Saratoga Springs. Baldwin's plaque was displayed with the Hall of Fame Class 2018 inductees.

The Baldwin family thanks the greater horse community for all they do everyday in helping to keep the sport of thoroughbred racing alive!!
-Margaux Viera

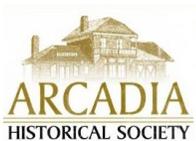
A Bit on Baldwin, Murphy and Four-Footed Winners

Baldwin, a native of Hamilton, Ohio, relocated to California during the Gold Rush and became successful in numerous business ventures. He owned several top Thoroughbreds and was one of the first prominent breeders in California. Racing under the name Santa Anita Stable, he campaigned champions Emperor of Norfolk (a Hall of Fame member) and Los Angeles, among others. Emperor of Norfolk won 21 of 29 starts, including the American Derby at Chicago's Washington Park in 1888, arguably the most prestigious race in the country at the time. Baldwin horses also won the American Derby in 1885 (Volante), 1886 (Silver Cloud) and 1894 (Rey el Santa Anita). It is also interesting to note that Baldwin's jockey, Isaac B. Murphy, was inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in its inaugural year of 1955. Murphy was the first three-time Kentucky Derby winner in the years of 1884, 1890 and 1891. He won 44% of all races that he entered; a feat not yet achieved by any other jockey to this date.

From the Society's Files: America's Greatest Pastime

This piece came up during a recent review of the Society's Family Histories

Richard Shiershke, an Arcadia resident, wrote of his family's Arcadia history in 1978 and described its early baseball history . . . "In 1914 Guy and Clint Corpe formed the Arcadia Merchants Baseball Team. The first ballpark was located on La Porte and First Avenue. Then it moved to First Avenue and Second Avenue. Guy managed the team for 26 years, and his team included Johnnie Lindell, the Musial brothers, Fred Fitzsimmons and Curt Davis. The author, Shiershke, watched Sunday's ball games in Arcadia with his family, and was impressed by the skills of the famous Fitzsimmons, exponent of the famed 'Knuckle ball.' It was said that with Fred on the mound there was no contest. Guy Corpe managed the team until his death in 1939."
-Carol Libby



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