



# The INNsider



Published by the Mission Inn Foundation & Museum for Our Docents and Volunteers  
3696 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

No. 109

[www.missioninnmuseum.com](http://www.missioninnmuseum.com)

November/December 2009

## MACAWS REAPPEAR AT THE INN

### Napoleon & Joseph at the door to greet arriving hotel guests.

By Deane Wylie  
Class of 2006

Napoleon and Joseph are back, as every docent has surely heard.

For the first time in more than 50 years, the Court of the Birds is home to two macaws who took up residence October 21 in a cage near the lobby entrance.

Named for the famous birds that lived in the courtyard for many years during and after Frank Miller's time, the new pair – blue-and-gold and scarlet macaws like their namesakes – spend their days greeting guests and munching on nuts, seeds and other treats.

They also take daily tours of the hotel – every day around 1 p.m. one of several bird-minders takes the pair for stroll around the lobby and other areas (but not the restaurants).

At dusk they retreat to a basement room near the rotunda, and then come out again between 8 and 9 a.m.

Principal caregivers are all hotel engineers – Ron Tallent, Dave Rubbins and Roy Shannon. In a pinch – sometimes literally, as he discovered – Chris Johnson, the hotel's night manager (and also a Foundation docent) gives the birds a lift. Chris got a painful souvenir of his bird portage when Napoleon became displeased and grabbed a thumb in his beak – “and he wouldn't let go,” Chris said.

To safeguard hotel guests and staff, a wrought-iron fence was recently erected around the macaws' cage, to keep fingers and other body parts at a safe distance from beaks.

The macaws came from the Magnolia Bird Farm, which has dealt in birds and supplies for more than 50 years with stores in Riverside and Anaheim.

The new Napoleon and Joseph, each about two years old, were owned by a couple that could no longer keep them, said Lori Miser of the Bird Farm. The two macaws have been together for more than a year.



Photos by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006

**NAPOLEON & MISS JOSEPH**  
have moved to the Mission Inn

“They have the mind of a seven-year-old and the muscles of Arnold Schwarzenegger,” she said, so handlers have to be careful when they're dealing with the birds.

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If you wanted a similar macaw for your own cage, it would cost about \$1,000, Miser said.

Neither of the birds has much to say at this point, but they will learn if they're tutored, she said. Joseph occasionally yells out "help!" And Chris Johnson says they've been heard to say "hello," "stop it!" and "cut it out!"

The original Joseph and Napoleon lived in the Court of the Birds until their deaths in 1939 and 1956, respectively. Macaw life spans are not as long as sometimes believed, according to Miser; 50 years would be typical.

Frank Miller acquired Joseph, a scarlet macaw, sometime in the 1890s, "as a gift from a San Diego sailor who had recently returned from South America," according to Joan Hall in the second volume of "Through the Doors of the Mission Inn."

Joseph's age was estimated at 50 when he died, according to a Riverside Press story on June 5, 1939.



Photo by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006

### **Napoleon in hand and birds in their outdoor cage**

The first Napoleon was a gift to Miller from an unnamed friend in June 1907. Napoleon on his death in July 1956 was buried on Mt. Rubidoux; there is no record of where Joseph was interred, although there are references to remains of other birds being buried in the Court of the Birds.

The earlier macaws were well-known attractions at the hotel. Frank Miller was pictured holding both birds, and his first wife, Isabella, is memorialized with Joseph in the stained glass panel behind the Music Room stage. Inn bathrooms once were adorned with macaw tiles,

and the birds are featured in the large floor medallion at the entry to the California Room.

Napoleon "proudly rode on the shoulder of his master, Frank Miller, and roamed through the courtyard and lobby to greet guests," Hall writes.

Joseph made the news when Albert Einstein and his wife, Elsa, visited the Mission Inn on Jan. 27, 1931, Hall notes. By that time Joseph "had become a demanding, mean old bird and few employees wanted to care for him," Hall says. The macaw squawked at the guests departing through the Court of the Birds and "Einstein came closer to get a better look."

A bellman with a pole transferred Joseph from a tree branch to Einstein's arm. "Joseph became upset standing on an arm that was moving back and forth," Hall says, "and pecked one of the professor's fingers." While it wasn't a serious bite, Hall notes that Einstein "was unable to play his violin for several days."

Until the arrival of the new macaws, docents could usually draw a smile from tour guests by saying it would have been more historically interesting if Joseph had been female, thus giving the Inn its own royal couple, Napoleon and Josephine. The new Joseph is, in fact, not male, but for casting purposes will remain known by the original's name.

## **ELAINE FORD – A HISTORY OF CARING FOR THE INN**

**By Dauris Slaughter**  
Class of 1999

Elaine Ford has been a Mission Inn Docent for two decades and continues to care for the Mission Inn and occasionally assist on tours. I had a chance to visit with Elaine and want to share her story with you.

When I first met Elaine, for this article I asked, "What is there about you that most people do not know?" Her reply was that she is a licensed pilot. After graduating from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., in 1943, she had a job in personnel in a defense plant in Chicago and met someone taking flying lessons and the rest is history. She earned \$23 a week and the lessons cost \$8

per hour. When flying cross-country she used compass directions and followed the railroad tracks aimed in the right direction to finally get there. She hasn't flown in years.

She flew with the Civil Air Patrol on weekends, as the CAP wanted the civilians to keep up their flying skills. She was a sergeant and wanted to be a WASP Women Airforce Service Pilot. However, by that time (1943), they were disbanding. From 1945-1947 she worked for the Red Cross with the Club Mobile Unit in France and Germany, where she helped set up clubs and Service Units for the soldiers still in the field.

Her father was an air raid warden in Des Moines during World War II while Elaine was beginning to fly. She smiles as she fondly remembers, her father saying, "The Germans could never attack middle America between the two of us.

She grew up in Des Moines, Iowa. After the war she returned and met her husband, Charles, and they have recently celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary!!! Charles was a pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force. After the war they moved to Stanford and he finished his education with an undergraduate and graduate degree. They have three children: two sons and a daughter with four grandchildren.

### **JOINED MISSION INN BOARD**

She became interested in the Mission Inn through Evie Guin who was president of the Friends of the Mission Inn Board, who asked Elaine if she would be public relations chairman. The following year in 1978 she became chairman of the Women's Division of the fund-raisers – "The Inn-Thing" – for the Foundation. This was when the gift shop was started. It was later transferred to the "Friends. The Mission Inn manager, at the time, told them they could not sell anything that was competitive with the area merchants. Basically they only sold items with the Mission Inn logo. Originally the gift shop was open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. seven days a week. The city set up the Foundation and appointed 19 civic leaders to run the hotel. The Friends no longer have a gift shop, but with Sharla Wright as their chair, these wonderful

ladies continue to raise money to restore artifacts for the Mission Inn.

Sue Johnson, on the Foundation Board, asked Elaine to conduct an inventory of the Inn furnishings and items. With the help of an UCR art history intern and 65 volunteers, almost everything was catalogued, described, measured and numbered in the Cloister, Spanish and Rotunda wings.

Elaine joined the first Docent Class around 1990 and is still even today assisting on tours. In 1994 as president of the Friends, she was responsible for the "Inn Lovers Weekend" when 110 hotel rooms were reserved for this celebration.

Reflective of her own flying days and experiences with the Civil Air Patrol, she says one of the most exciting times at the Inn for her was when the WASPs put their wings on the wall. She loves the Fliers Wall, having served on the Fliers Wall committee from 1985-94.

### **LED HISTORIC MISSION INN BOOK TEAM**

In 1995 she was chair of a wonderful group of writers who spent nine months compiling "The Historic Mission Inn" Book.

"The Friends board allotted me \$50,500 to publish a "coffee table book," Elaine said "I spent about \$400 more. This is the biggest single source of income for the Friends. It was sold through the gift corner until that closed 2005. It is now in its fourth printing and I was in charge of the first three," She added.

When her husband retired, they decided to slow down, bought a motor home, and relaxed by traveling throughout the U.S. This led to more travel across the seas where they continued to visit many European countries.

At this point in her life, she has chosen to no longer give tours, but she still assists. Elaine stresses it is very important for docents to review their script, read the INNsider, plus attend training meetings for refreshing and to learn new information through training.

Elaine has been a stellar volunteer to the Mission Inn Foundation and Docent Program. We are fortunate to have had her expertise and devotion to the Mission Inn. Thank you, Elaine, for all you have contributed to the success of the volunteer program.

### NEW HOME OF NANKING BELL



Photo by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006

The Nanking Bell has been moved to a new location next to the Campanario. It is found, along the walkway into the Mission Inn from valet parking at Mission Inn Avenue. The plaque on the bell has been removed by the hotel and it is being reworded for greater accuracy.

### MISSION INN IS PLACE OF LEARNING FROM MEMORIES OF VISITORS

**By Steve Spiller,**  
Museum & Collections Manager

One exciting aspect of working at the Mission Inn Museum we all appreciate is the opportunity to learn from our guests. The Mission Inn is a place where memories are made. The uncertainty of who will walk in the door keeps us alert for new information, and sometimes, the donation of objects and archival

materials essential to our understanding of the hotel's history.

We are also alert for phone calls and emails. As an example, a man in Indiana recently contacted us about a bell marked "Mission Inn, Riverside, California." Attached to the bell is a beaded chain and cross. The gentleman found the bell inside the wall of his old house and wanted information about it. We know it is one of many souvenirs sold in the Cloister Gift Shop. Why and how it ended up behind a wall is unknown.

A recent call to the front desk taken by Sharla led to our purchase and acquisition (thanks to the donations of several individuals) of a small archive of immense importance. The materials relate to the writing of "The Mission Play" by John McGroarty.

In his book, *Whitewashed Adobe*, historian William Deverell noted that the play "became the single most successful American theatrical performance of the age." The play premiered on Apr. 12, 1912. Deverell credits Frank Miller with the idea for the play showcasing California history in the manner of *The Oberammergau Passion Play*. The archive includes the original contract signed by Miller and McGroarty and correspondence from Miller to McGroarty.

To paraphrase Candid Camera, "don't be surprised if sometime, somewhere, someplace when you least expect it." we add to our knowledge of the Mission Inn.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS / EVENTS

- Festival of Lights Perimeter Tours (Saturday, Nov. 28, 2009 – Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010) (Thursday – Sunday at 6 and 7 p.m.)
- Docent and Volunteer Christmas Party Dec. 14
- Continuing Education - -will be held on the campus at Frank Augustus Miller Middle School Jan. 24, 2010
- Fox Theatre Gala Opening Friday Jan. 15, 2010 (Public Tours 10 am to 4 pm Saturday Jan..16 and Sunday Jan. 17)
- Frank Augustus Miller Middle School Dedication Feb. 4, 2010.

### **LOVE AT THE MISSION INN**

**Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Lindsey Lopez-Johnson**



**NEWLYWEDS** - Docent Chris Johnson (class of 2006) hotel night manager and Lindsey Lopez found each other at the Mission Inn. Chris was leading a docent tour for new Inn employees and Lindsey was hired to work in the Presidential Suite. They learned that each had graduated from UCR with a degree in History and both went to the same church. They were married September 19, 2009 at the University of Redlands.

### **MOUNT RUBIDOUX HIKE**

**By Sue Bartel**

**Class of 2006**

On Oct. 24, a group of 40 intrepid hikers trekked their way up Mt. Rubidoux led by two noted Mt. Rubidoux historians, Glenn Wenzel and George Flower.

The two-hour hike began at the Ninth Street trailhead and ended with a scrumptious brunch graciously hosted by Chuck and Sally Beaty.

The Beatys live only a stone's throw from the trailhead. Their sprawling property fits into the mountain's boulders where they've added a waterfall. The estate also includes a swimming pool, rose gardens, and a recently added orchard with avocado and citrus trees.

Their home overlooks a beautiful vista of the city of Riverside. The hike is becoming a popular annual event promoted by the Docent Association's Events Committee.



**Photo by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006**

**HIKE LEADERS** – Mt. Rubidoux historians Glenn Wenzel and George Flower led the way.



**Photo by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006**

**HISTORY LESSON** - George Flower discusses a plaque at trailhead of Mt. Rubidoux Memorial Park



PhotoS by Sue Bartel  
Class of 2006

**A GROUP SHOT – Most of the 40 hikers who made the trek to the top are shown in the above photos The hike is becoming a popular annual event promoted by the Mission Inn Docent Association's Events Committee**

### THE WONDER OF THE HISTORICAL 'MISSION INN GEYSER'

**By Pete Weber  
Guest Contributor**

Let me introduce myself, I am Peter Weber, the son of the Peter Weber, the lead designer who worked for G. Stanley Wilson when the Rotunda wing of the Mission Inn was designed and built.

I will bet you Docents have never heard of the Mission Inn Geyser!

In 1992 I was asked to participate in the filming of a video on the history of the Mission Inn. The other video participants were Helge Landrup, superintendent of construction for the Mission Inn renovation, and Ernie Wilson, the youngest son of architect G. Stanley Wilson. The day was spent videotaping reminiscences and it contains some great stories. But, one of the

most interesting stories of the day was told off camera when Ernie told us about the "Mission Inn Geyser."

Between 1938 and WW II Ernie was the chief engineer at the Mission Inn. His job was to maintain the health of the Mission Inn facilities. In those days the water supply for the Mission Inn was a tank located in the tower on the southwest corner of the hotel near Mission Inn Avenue and Main Street. (Currently above where the Mission Inn Museum is located)\*

According to Ernie twice a year they had to drain and clean the water tank. The draining process involved dumping the water on a path that crossed Main Street. Occasionally they would let the water out too fast and the business across Main Street would get a free bath.

The Mission Inn Geyser, however, occurred after they refilled the tank. By that time most of the water pipes in the Inn would be drained so when they added the water to the tank that caused the air in the water lines – especially the toilet tank lines -- to become compressed.



Photo by Sue Bartel

**Peter Weber addressed the Docent Forum  
on September 09, 2009**

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The next urgent assignment was to visit each of the guest rooms in the hotel and flush the toilets before a resident did. Occasionally a resident would get to the toilet before the assigned employee could visit the room. When that happened, the "Mission Inn Geysers" would come to life throwing water around the room and on to the guest. Of course if the unknowing guest happened to be sitting on the toilet at the time of the geysers it was even more exciting

**\* We recently discovered that the tower above the museum could not have supported the weight of a water tank due to the type of construction and materials.**



## **TOWERING QUESTIONS**

The History Research committee is delving into the question of water delivery and storage within the hotel. Interest in this subject came about as a result of Walt Park's research on the various towers in preparation for his forthcoming architectural talk to the new docent class and Peter Weber's article included in this issue. The photos pictured here show some "behind the scenes" views of the water delivery system. Although learning how water was delivered throughout the hotel may not be of interest to many of our tour guests, the History Research committee will continue to research the subject.



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Photos by Doug Hargis

**54° at Duane's** wine bar has opened in the Mission Inn. With a sleek interior and rich ambiance, **54° at Duane's** is offering the finest wines, tastings and tapas. It features an artful collection of the best wines in the world.

### **MISSION INN FOUNDATION – MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Mission Inn Foundation preserves, interprets and promotes the cultural heritage of the Mission Inn, Riverside, and the surrounding Southern California communities through its museum services, educational programs and outreach activities. The Foundation was formed in 1976 to preserve the public trust in the Mission Inn, a privately owned National Historic Landmark.*

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**The INNSider**  
**Mission Inn Foundation & Museum**  
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**The MISSION INN MUSEUM is open daily 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Museum phone: 951-788-9556; Office, 951-781-8241; Fax, 951-341-6574; [www.missioninnmuseum.com](http://www.missioninnmuseum.com) - E-mail, [info@missioninnmuseum.com](mailto:info@missioninnmuseum.com)**