

The 640 Report

640 Heritage
Preservation
Foundation

Issue 17 - Winter 2013

Preserving the House that Women Built for a Second Century
640 SUTTER STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

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Always Wear Your Fur on the Inside

The Foundation was pleased and grateful to receive a number of generous contributions at the end of 2012 and in early 2013 (see Year-End Donors page 5). The Board thanks all of you for your support as we spotlight Gladys K. Mitchell. In addition to her previous donations, this year she was able and happy to donate the bountiful sum of \$500,000. She specifically requested the funds be used to pay down our construction loan. This along, with our other donations, will significantly reduce the Metropolitan Club's debt service, and lower the interest rate.

Gladys joined the Club as a child and has been a member for thirty-six years. She fondly remembers working on the balance bars in the gym and enjoying the delicious chocolate sundaes in the dining room after swim class.

During her preteen and teen years, school in Switzerland and Italy took her away from San Francisco and the Metropolitan Club. While living abroad she developed her life-long interest in fine food, wine and travel; as she developed a fluency in both French and Italian. She believes in sharing meals, particularly enjoys Chef Mehrdad's fine cuisine and a Mediterranean diet. Her brother Holbrook T. Mitchell shares her love of wine and grows Bordeaux varietal grapes in Napa Valley.

The siblings' development of a wine palette came from their Father, as Mother was a Quaker and teetotaler. Their Mother was cultured, refined and educated. She chose to collect antiquarian books rather than jewelry. Her library at one point contained 80,000 books. In jest the family called the library her "jewel box."

Charitable giving has always been a key component in Gladys's life. Her philanthropy is diverse. In addition to her support of the Metropolitan Club, she has contributed to the University of Cambodia and a school in Palestine. She also gave money to refinish all the doors during the recent Palace of Fine Arts restoration. Closer to home, Gladys jointly established the Dr. Josephson Chair Neurohospitalist at UCSF, for patients with brain disease, in memory of her Father.

Charitable giving is just one the many values her depression-era parents instilled in her. They taught her not to squander precious resources, and the value of saving. She learned to be so modest and unassuming that she was hesitant to be featured here, only agreeing in hopes it would encourage others to donate to the 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation. Gladys took her father's advice to heart when he told her to "Always wear your fur on the inside."

—Alice Carey

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Message from the President



President Alice Carey

As the founding Vice President, it is an honor and pleasure to return to the 640 Heritage Preservation Board as President this year. Carol Ann Rogers, Ollie Dollar, and I began establishing the Foundation in 2003. What a difference those ten years have made. At its inception our charge was to develop Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation and to establish the Foundation as a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Since that time that fledgling Foundation has thrived and proceeded to raise over \$6,000,000 for the preservation of the Metropolitan Club.

Moving forward, we have an exciting year planned. Our goals next year include:

- To Continue our successful, Donor Luncheon, and Pillsbury Society
- To increase our visibility within the Metropolitan Club, and the Community
- To expand our Tribute gifts to honor staff, as well as members
- To nominate the recent rehabilitation project for a State award
- To Launch our website
- To Provide educational lectures, tours and exhibits

As we implement the above the Foundation Board has supplemented our existing Finance, Nominating and Pillsbury Society Committees with our new Events, History, Outreach, Website, 640 Report, and Awards Committees.

It could not be a more exciting time to return to the Foundation Board, as we begin planning for our 2015 Centennial celebration. What a perfect opportunity to fulfill our Mission:

- To preserve and memorialize the history and architecture of the woman's athletic club...
- To research the heritage of the woman's athletic club movement, and,
- To provide opportunities for public education about this important piece of women's history

Of course we plan to enjoy ourselves as we fulfill our mission. Toward that end we have created a new column, *Fun Facts*, designed to provide 640 Report readers with a little history lesson, and hopefully induce a smile.

Fun Facts True or False?

Elizabeth Taylor was the first woman to answer a transcontinental telephone call.



Find the answer inside.

New Board Members

In January the Board of Directors enthusiastically welcomed new director Gee Gee Platt and welcomed back as a director the first Foundation president, Carol Ann Rogers. Both bring to the board extraordinary energy, talent and expertise.

Gertrude Bland Platt, or “Gee Gee” as we all know her, entered the world of historic preservation in 1963 as Survey Chairman for the Junior League of San Francisco’s *Here Today: San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage*, in which the Metropolitan Club building is mentioned. She accepted this volunteer position, so that she could work from home while caring for two young sons. This project led to her appointment by Mayor Shelley to the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Board at its inception in 1967. She served on this board under four mayors and was board president from 1973 until 1980.

In addition, Gee Gee has served on the Board of the California Preservation Foundation, which named her Preservationist of the Year, and on the boards of San Francisco Architectural Heritage, the California Historical Society, the Foundation for San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage and San Francisco Tomorrow. She is a valued advisor to San Francisco and many other California cities on preservation law and planning and on identification of historic resources.

Currently she is a member of the Mayor of San Francisco’s Historic Preservation Fund Committee, charged with funding projects from the \$2.5 million settlement monies the city received as compensation for damages to the historic fabric of the old Emporium department store when the San Francisco Center was developed.

Gee Gee established her own firm G. Bland Platt and Associates, Historic Preservation Consultants, in 1980 advising owners and lessees of architecturally and historically significant buildings, as well as their architects. In 2005 she joined the Metropolitan Club, where she enjoys entertaining her children and grandchildren.

Carol Ann Rogers is well known to most supporters of the 640 Foundation and members of the Metropolitan Club. While chairing the Club’s Long Range Planning Committee, she spearheaded the nomination of the 640 Sutter Street building to the National Register of Historic Places and established the 501(c)(3) Foundation, which she served as president from 2005 until 2010 when she was elected Club president. She completed her term as president of the Club in 2012.

Carol Ann is a graduate of Wellesley College and served as president of the Junior League of San Francisco from 1982 until 1983. She was a docent for San Francisco Architectural Heritage and has served on numerous volunteer boards. Carol Ann also held the position of Development Director for Cathedral School. Carol Ann and Nielsen’s daughters Jennifer and Katharine, their daughter-in-law Adrienne and granddaughter Cassie are all members of the Metropolitan Club.

When Carol Ann joined the Metropolitan Club in 1985, her sponsor characterized her as, “a caring woman who can channel new interest into productive results.” That has proved to be a very happy understatement.”

–Molly Brant



2013 640 HPF Board (left to right): top row–Karen Rose, Pat Ascher, Alice Carey, Carol Ann Rogers, Peggy Mitchell; bottom row–Helene Ettelson, Margaret Handelman, Molly Brant, Gee Gee Platt



New Board Members Gee Gee Platt and Carol Ann Rogers

The Archives: 1915–2013

Significant historical events took place in 1915, the founding year of the Metropolitan Club. The year-long Panama-Pacific International Exposition (also known as the World's Fair) took place in the Marina District at the present day location of the Palace of Fine Arts. World War I raged in Europe, and the U.S. House of Representatives rejected a proposal to give women the right to vote.

As we count down the days to the 100th anniversary of the Metropolitan Club, we look back on a rich and vibrant history of indomitable women, some of whom, while joining the fight for women's rights, founded our home away home at 640 Sutter Street.

The Archives, a research level collection of primary source documents located in the staff area of the third floor, is a critical resource for the celebration, providing the background and information needed for those wishing to know Club history. The Archives include such information as Board Meeting Minutes, Club *Bulletins*, rosters, annual reports, by-laws and house rules, dating back to 1916. Member account ledgers and signature books can also be found, as well as a collection of stationery and old logos representing different periods of time, and more. Thanks to the meticulous work and care of librarian/curator, Archives Committee Chair Nancy Burrill, all documents are carefully preserved in archival, acid-free folders and boxes.

The Archives also houses photo al-

bums from the last 30–40 years. We would like to collect more! Please send copies of your photos, either print or digital, from gatherings both formal (Club events) and informal, to Jillian Einck (communications@metropolitanclubsf.org).

Valuable history can be found in the personal scrapbooks of some early Members. These scrapbooks, despite the archival boxes, are nonetheless extremely fragile and vulnerable to further deterioration and must be handled with care.

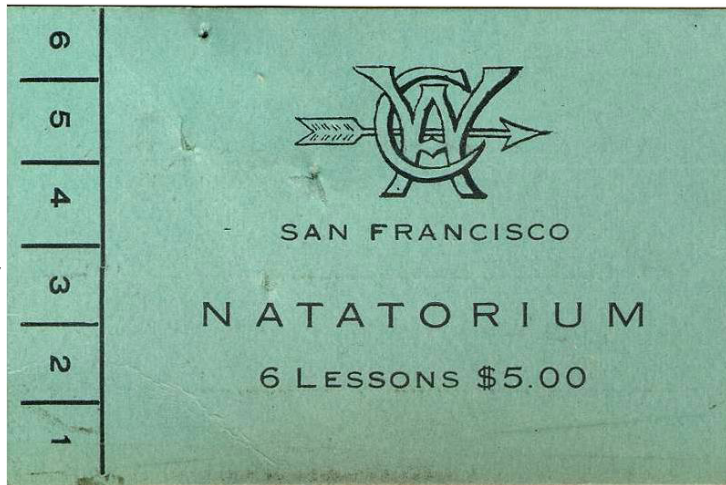
Among them is the scrapbook of Mrs. Thomas Driscoll, a founding

newspaper clippings about the Club and Club Members from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Examiner*.

Some members maintained permanent residence in the 640 building, including Mrs. A.G. Boggs (Member 157), who lived in rooms 500–501 from 1920–1948. Mrs. Boggs reveals that she was not the first Member to secure a room. That honor went to Dr. Agnes Walker, who lived in room 600, which was why Mrs. Boggs chose the same (although larger!) location on a different floor. Mrs. Boggs saved a considerable amount of correspondence with the Club, including a letter written in 1927 protesting her rent increase to \$135, as well as a letter to the General Manager in 1947 reminding staff of the proper way to serve butter (note: a copy of this letter, labeled in the Archives as “Thumbprints on the Butter,” can be viewed in the display case in the foyer off the reception area on the first floor).

Due to the fragility of these irreplaceable scrapbooks and other materials, and the historic value of all of the archival records, access to the Archives is by appointment only. If you need to do research in the Archives, please contact an Archives Committee member: Nancy Burrill, Judy Gordon, Carol Ann Rogers or Marcia Schneider for access. If you would like to join the committee, we especially are looking for Members with library, documents, records management, curatorial, and/or archives experience or interest. Please contact Susan Gearey regarding appointments to Archives or other Club committees.

—Marcia Schneider



Member, who maintained a scrapbook from 1917–1923. Within the scrapbook, one can find enticing memories, such as announcements, chits, photos, news stories and more. Mrs. Driscoll paid \$325 to become a Life Member in 1915, as documented in her scrapbook.

Mrs. Elsa Black, another founding Member, joined in 1917, and kept a scrapbook from 1946–1986. This scrapbook gives us first-hand information about the name change from The Woman's Athletic Club to The Metropolitan Club, approved by Members in 1966. Mrs. Black kept

Memories of the Woman's Athletic Club

The following is an excerpt from Betty Lampen's interview with the late Jo Wallace taped April 12, 1988.

JW: At the former Madison School, now the Claire Lilienthal School on Clay Street between Cherry and Arguello that goes all the way to Sacramento Street, as soon as school was out, the little girls that belonged to the Club would go tearing out the Sacramento Street entrance and we'd run and stand on the corner waiting for the Number Four streetcar to come. We would climb on the streetcar and misbehave terribly all the way downtown, exiting either at Mason or Taylor Street.

JW: At Madison School, we had organized sports for the boys. But the girls didn't have any. Some of us wanted to play basketball, so we got the boys in our class to be our coaches. But those of us who belonged to the Woman's Athletic Club, you see, got special treatment because we were coached at the Club. There were at least three athletic directors: for swimming, for gymnastic equipment and one for basketball.

JW: Way back in the earlier days, every Saturday, they let all the water out of the pool and scrubbed it and filled it again on Sunday.

BL: Really! How extravagant! Oh, it was saltwater though. When did they change to freshwater?

JW: I have no idea when they changed to freshwater, but I remember distinctly the idea was that you had to get down and swim early because otherwise it would be too shallow to swim.

BL: So, they had no chlorine in those days, it was 'just change the whole pool'.

JW: Yes, change the whole pool. Then Sunday it was being filled up and Monday it would be ready to go.

BL: And not heated, of course.

JW: Of course not. Nothing like that. And we didn't mind it.

BL: Where did you actually learn to swim?

JW: We learned to swim through the Red Cross at the YWCA next door. Then we went to what is now the Marines Memorial formerly the Western Women's Club...then I went to the Women's City Club, which is now the St. Francis Tower, and there I learned how to swim properly.

BL: I learned how to swim entirely from the Women's Athletic Club. Mrs. Mackie was my teacher. I don't think I ever enjoyed swimming anywhere else as I do in that particular pool; Tahoe was always too cold, and everyone else's pool was too small, and the river was too dirty.

JW: Actually, I learned to swim before I belonged to the Women's Athletic Club. Not nicely, I didn't have a good stroke at all but I did learn from Mrs. Mackie too. I don't ever remember her wet.

BL: No, I never saw her in the water.

JW: No, I never saw that woman in the water, ever. And I'm told that she does know how to swim.

BL: She did, she did know how to swim.

JW: But I never saw her wet, she was always in a bathing suit.

BL: But she was an inspiration.

JW: Yes, and she taught by the book. I'm not sure what the book is.

BL: Well it was a book she and her sister wrote.

JW: Then after we finished swimming, we would take a shower quickly, run downstairs and get our clothes on as fast as we could and bolt upstairs to the tea room on the fourth floor. And we used to eat lovely confections that had some sort of crispy cookie on the bottom and then a great big gob of marshmallow stuff and then it was all covered with chocolate and it was the best thing in the world...

BL: And did you know that tea cost \$.25?

—Gee Gee Platt

Fun Facts Answer



On January 25, 1915, the year the Metropolitan Club was founded, the first transcontinental telephone calls were placed to San Francisco from New York, Washington D.C., and Boston. From New York Alexander Graham Bell reenacted his famous 1876 "Watson, come here I want you" call to his assistant Thomas A. Watson in San Francisco. Watson replied it would now take him a week to get there. From D.C., President Woodrow Wilson congratulated President Charles Moore of the Panama-Pacific Exposition opening in San Francisco. Finally from Boston, Charles Taylor, founder of the *Boston Globe*, called and spoke with his San Francisco daughter, Elizabeth Taylor (Pillsbury).

it's True

The Founder of the Metropolitan Club, Elizabeth Taylor Pillsbury was the first woman to receive a transcontinental telephone call. Now what made you think of the actress? She wasn't born until 1932.

Tribute Program

640 Heritage Preservation Foundation

THE 640 HERITAGE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES
THE FOLLOWING TRIBUTE GIFTS TO THE FOUNDATION:
SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2012

IN HONOR OF

DONOR

Ruth Cowan	Nancy Johnson
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IN HONOR OF

DONOR

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Constance Thompson	Richard C. Henry

IN MEMORY OF

DONOR

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Phoebe Olcott	Suzanne Roth
Ed and Marion Millson	Margaret Millson-Wu
Jean Chaddock Edwards	Susan Schneider

Please contact Conor Ryan Tung in the Foundation Office for information about
making a Tribute Gift to honor or remember a special person in your life.

415.928.6925 ext. 201 • 640HPF@MetropolitanClubsf.org

Elizabeth Pillsbury Society for Planned Giving

The following women have included the 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation and/or the Metropolitan Club in their estate plan. We thank them for their visionary support, kind generosity, and thoughtful foresight.

Mary Louise Anderson

June Arney

Mildred Centanni

Chong Cook

Evelyn R. David

Carol Ede

Dr. Cecile Julia Eggens

Helene Ettelson

Susan J. Gearey

Pria Graves

Linda Hannawalt

Shirley Hucklin

Effiellen Jefferies

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Mary Elizabeth Phillips

Emilie Plake

Nancy G. Raznick

Susan D. Scannon

Patricia Bondesen Smith

Margrethe Ann Welch

Nancy Weston

Renate-Karin Wunsch

Mary Yetter

Testimonial from Club President, Susan Gearey

"As an active member of the Metropolitan Club for over 17 years, I feel it is important to leave a legacy for the next generation of Club members. We have an incredible facility that can be used and enjoyed for many generations to come and through the Elizabeth Pillsbury Society, we as members have the opportunity to help see that future. I invite other members to join me in considering a bequest to the Metropolitan Club so that we can insure the vitality and health of our club for the next 100 years!"

Important News About the IRA Charitable Rollover

There has been a great deal in the news about the recent tax law changes as part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, but one important provision has not received much press: Congress extended the IRA Charitable Rollover law through December 31, 2013.

The law allows individuals who are over 70 ½ to transfer up to

\$100,000 directly from their IRAs to qualified charities, like the 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation in 2013. This distribution is called a "qualified charitable distribution." This amount qualifies for all or a portion of the individual's minimum required distribution and does not need to be included in the individual's gross income. Although there is no charitable income tax deduction for this type

of distribution, this can be a very tax-efficient way to make a gift to charity.

There are restrictions and certain requirements that need to be followed when making a qualified charitable distribution. Before proceeding, you should consult your tax advisor to discuss your particular situation, including any impact of your states tax laws.

Have You Met Conor?

Congratulations to Conor Ryan Tung on completing her first year as Foundation Director in the fall of 2012. Conor hails from Hartford, Connecticut, and graduated from William Smith College in Geneva, New York, in 1995.

She held positions of increasing responsibility at Tiffany and Co. in New York City before coming to California to head their Palo Alto store in late 2006. She worked for Outlined Productions in San Francisco in 2010, providing development, marketing and operational support to local non-profit clients, and then became Operations Manager for Bulgari in San Francisco.

At the suggestion of her mother, who is a member of the Town and County Club of Hartford, a reciprocal club of the Metropolitan Club, Conor saw the Metropolitan Club in 2009 and selected it as the site for her wedding to Californian Richard Tung in 2009.

Conor and Richard are devoted to their dog Fergus, who is a rare breed of Irish terrier. One of their dreams is a trip to China. She was a member of the Junior League of New York City for ten years and has run 11 marathons!

Conor's training and experience suit her well to being Foundation Director, working with the Board of Directors in the areas of fundraising,

donor recognition and special events, planned giving and communications which includes oversight and production of the quarterly newsletter and development of the Foundation's website. If you have not already become acquainted with Conor, do take time to soon. She is professional, resourceful, energetic and fun. The Foundation is fortunate and grateful to have her.

—Molly Brant



640 Foundation to Host Appreciation Luncheon

Spring will be right on time this year for our annual 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation appreciation luncheon on March 22nd. A sherry reception and an effusion of color will be the order of the day. Peggy Mitchell, Chair of the luncheon, has been working with Chef Mehrdad and with 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation Director, Conor Ryan Tung, to ensure that every detail will be spring-inspired to honor our guests. Invited are Gladys K. Mitchell, recent lead donors, and members of the Elizabeth Pillsbury Society.

This year's speaker will be a special treat. Metropolitan Club member Charlene Harvey will provide an insider's eye view of what the next 15 years hold in store for our esteemed neighbor, the Presidio. Widely respected as a civic volunteer, Charlene also serves as a Board member of the Presidio Trust. She will talk about current plans for the

Park's ongoing evolution including the restoration of the Main Post Bluffs, as well as the continuing work on Doyle Drive. Together, those areas will provide a spectacular setting for visitors and San Franciscans alike and will be the Bay Area's next new great destination.

This gathering will be one of the year's highlights and a special treat for many of those who work so hard to ensure the success of all of our 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation's endeavors.

—Peggy Mitchell



Luncheon speaker and Metropolitan Club Member, Charlene Harvey

YEAR-END DONORS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THESE
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Elizabeth Barlow

Margaret Brown

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Ruth Cowan

Ann Dey

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Beverly Maytag

Margaret McCaul

Gladys K. Mitchell