

San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

See this newsletter and much more in full color on the Internet at www.postcard.org

Meetings are held the fourth Saturday of every month except December.

Visitors and dealers always welcome.

September 2003

Volume XVIII, No. 8

Next Meeting: Saturday, September 20, 12 to 3 PM

Fort Mason Center, **Room C-370**

Laguna Street at Marina Boulevard, San Francisco

Please disarm pagers, cell phones, and alarms during the meeting.

Program Notes: John Freeman presents: “The Portola Festival of 1909, A Party with a Purpose.” This was probably the most exciting and successful party ever thrown in San Francisco, and John will be using newspaper accounts and postcards to recreate the spirit of frivolity that prevailed for those five days in October 1909. He will use a state of the art digital projector to show the images of postcards from his and other club members’ collections.

Show & Tell: California, its governors and quirky politics and, as always, collector’s choice. Three item, two minute limit.

COVER CARD See index of Portola [Portolá] Festival postcard images: <http://postcard.org/portola.htm>

This month’s cover card is one of my favorite San Francisco postcards. For me it is an image that captures



the aura of the young city. The beautiful youthful rider in Western garb astride her proud steed—she greeting the world with a wave of her wide brimmed hat, in tribute to her Mexican heritage—he, with arched neck and legs ready to spring forward in parade step or to charge into battle—seem to represent the City of San Francisco as leader of the State of California. Charm and gaiety guiding strength and readiness. They stand upon a verdant bluff. Could it be pre-Coital Telegraph Hill? Beyond them lie the azure bay and the languid hills of Marin County. Afloat on the

bay waters are six ships, their white hulls and yellow superstructures brightened by sunlight piercing the cloud strewn sky. Above it all, the red and yellow shield holding the P of Portola harks back to the city’s earliest days as an outpost of the Spanish crown. This flowery description is to benefit those readers who cannot view these pages in full color on www.postcard.org. For all of us a quiz: What are those ships and why? Answer if you can before you read John Freeman’s Portola Festival article within.

—Lewis Baer

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Newsletter Deadline: 10th of each month

MINUTES, August 23, 2003

The summer doldrums weighed heavily on Fort Mason. Too bad that so few members showed up to take advantage of the ample supply of parking spaces and new old stuff at the Italo-American Museum rummage sale and the SF Library book sale—not to mention the club tables.

Only seventeen members signed in at the meeting, a small but select group. Cards were brought for sale or trade by Nancy Tucker, Shirley Tuten, Lew Baer, Joseph Jaynes, and Albert Muller.

We were called to order by Vice President Bob Bowen.

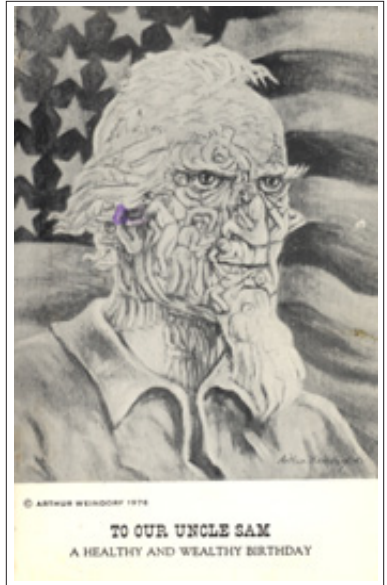
Announcements: Ted Miles told of the newly renovated Maritime Museum Visitor Center at Hyde and Jefferson—which will open later this week with free admission.

Joseph Jaynes reminded us of the Santa Cruz Show on September 6 and 7 and handed out free passes for all club members.

—Bruce Diggelman, Recording Secretary

An expanded show and tell and question and answer session such as that on www.postcard.org, our club web site, was the program. There were several show-and-tellers, but only two questions. Gail Ellerbrake told that she was left an album of

cards by a friend who collected Fantasy and Gail asked “What are these called?” as she held up vintage cards of men’s faces created out of melded nude female bodies. It took a few seconds for the word to leave the tips of our tongues: Metamorphic.



[Here’s a modern metamorphic Uncle Sam made out of American workers by Arthur Weindorf for the Bicentennial. -Ed.]

Albert Muller told that he has started a new topic that he doesn’t think he’ll find many cards of: attached cotton seeds and sacks. ... Ted Miles told about an unusual museum, the American Museum in Bath England; its displays reproduce life in the US from colonial times to the 20th century. ... Nancy Tucker buys postcards on eBay and a dealer



sent along his business card that is like a miniature postcard; she also showed a match book postcard from a hospital and two reference books on Detroit and publisher trademarks. ... Joseph Jaynes collects gas stations among other topics, and he, like all of us, is always looking for the quintessential card; he showed us his: the Stinker Gas station in Wells, Nevada.

John Freeman showed a 1911 card with a portrait of a woman in ostrich plumes with the caption "Evelyn will be waiting for you at the Palace Hotel"; it was an advertising card for a Western Regional Lumberman's meeting he had bought on eBay as a prostitution card. John also showed a



card we [at least we used to] see frequently of the Greater San Francisco allegory, a female figure with sword and cloud above a topographical view of the Bay below. "What is it?" he asked and then answered. The card, shown here, fits into a

political movement of 1911. The Greater San Francisco Association was aware of how Los Angeles was growing wildly and wanted to see the same expansion up here. It began a movement to take over San Mateo County—mainly for its Crystal Springs water and reservoir—and align with

Alameda and Oakland as well. The card, John told us, represents a ballot initiative of 1912. "Greater San Francisco" failed at the polls.

—Notes taken by Lew Baer

TREASURER/HALL MANAGER REPORT

As of August 31, 2003 \$1,476.05

—Daniel Saks, Treasurer

WELCOME BACK MEMBERS

Rudy and Natalie Schafer, 2820 Echo Way, Sacramento CA 95821, 916 971-1953; promoters of the now twice yearly Sacramento Capitol Postcard and Paper Show.

POSTCARD CALENDAR

Sep. 20-21, Saturday-Sunday, **Daly City**, Antique & Collectibles Show, Cow Palace, 8am-6pm, 9am-5pm*

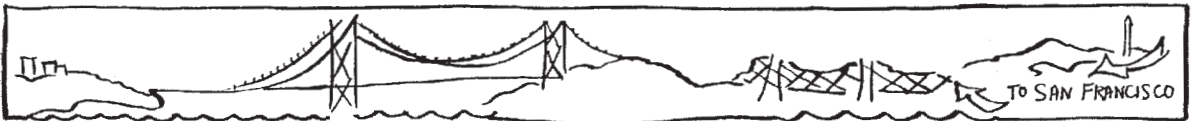
Sep. 26-28, Friday-Sunday, **Pasadena**, Hal Lutsky's Postcard & Paper Show, 400 West Colorado Blvd., Friday 1pm-7pm, Saturday 10am-6pm, Sunday 10am-4pm*+

Oct. 4-5, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Antique Show at the Marin Civic Center Exhibit Hall (San Pedro exit from 101), 10am-6 and 5pm*

Oct. 11-12, Saturday-Sunday, **Santa Rosa**, Redwood Empire Postcard and Paper show and Antique Bottle show, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Saturday 12-7pm (\$5), Sunday 9am-3pm (free entry)*

Oct. 18-19, Saturday-Sunday **San Mateo**, Collectors Revival, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Saturday 9am-6pm, Sunday 10am-5pm*

Oct. 25-26, Saturday-Sunday, **Auburn**, Antique Show, Placer County Fairgrounds, 10am-5 and 4pm*



Nov. 1-2, Saturday-Sunday **Pomona**, RBF Antique & Collectibles Show, Pomona County Fairgrounds, **75+ dealers!** 10am to 6 and 3pm*+

Nov. 7-8, Friday-Saturday, **Tulare**, Antique & Collectibles Show, 1771 E. Tulare Avenue Friday 11am-6pm, Sat. 9am-4pm*

Nov. 8, Saturday, **Sunnyvale**, Silicon Valley Postcard and Paper show, Sunnyvale Elks Hall. 10am-5pm. **Free entry** for SFBAPCC members!

Nov. 8-9, Saturday-Sunday, **Arcadia**, San Gabriel Valley Postcard and Paper show, 50 West Duarte Road, 10am-6 and 4pm+

Nov. 9, Sunday, **San Francisco**, Antique Show, Hall of Flowers, 9th Ave. & Lincoln, 10am-4pm*

Nov. 15-16, Saturday-Sunday, **Concord**, Hal Lutsky's Postcard and Paper Collectibles Show, Concord Centre, 5298 Clayton Road, 10am-6 and 4pm*+

Nov. 20-23, Thursday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Thursday-Saturday 11am-8pm, Sunday 11am-5pm*

Nov. 28-30, Friday-Sunday, **Sacramento**, America's Largest Christmas Bazaar, Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd. Fri-Sat 10am-8pm, Sun 10am-6pm*

Dec. 6-7, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Antique Show, Marin Civic Center, 10am-6 and 5pm*

Dec. 13-14, Saturday-Sunday, **Granada Hills**, San Fernando Valley Postcard and Paper show, Granada Pavilion, 10am-6 and 4pm+

*Ken Prag will set up at these shows. Call him at 415 586-9386 or kprag(at)planetaria.net to let him know what he can bring for you.

+R&N Postcards will be at these shows with cards and postcard supplies for sale.

Postcards are available for browsing and sale 7 days a week at the San Francisco Antique Mall, 701 Bayshore Blvd., where 101 and 280 meet, info: (415) 656-3530; also Wednesday through Sunday, at Postcards, Books, Etc. in Cotati. Call before coming: 707 795-6499.

CAPTAIN JACK GLICKEN

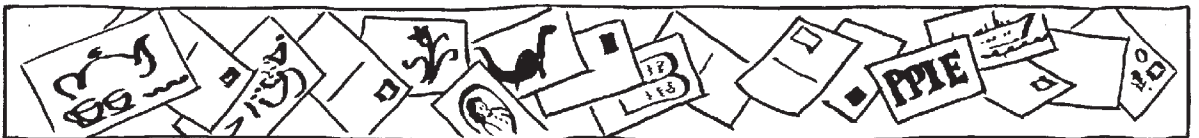
Yes, we've seen Cap'n Jack long before he appeared on the cover of this year's roster.



The 1930s was Jack's grandest decade. In 1934 and '35 he was chief of police at the Midget Village at the Panama-California International Exposition in San Diego, and in New York the 32 inch 65 pounder married all 400

pounds of Mildred Monte. He spent much of 1938 in Hollywood working on a film that was to receive lasting worldwide acclaim. Jack was one of the 120 uncredited Munchkins in The Wizard of Oz. 1939 was perhaps his greatest year when the film was released and he reprised his role as police chief of the Midget Village but this time at the GGIE on Treasure Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay. Here he could be seen along with the Headless Girl, an octopus wrestler, and naked ladies in cowboy boots.

—Lew



SAN FRANCISCO THEATERS... *Continued*

Rudy Behlmer worked in a theater* in San Francisco when he was a high school student and so the category is one of his favorites. This month he sent a circa 1920 night view of Market Street with two theaters, Pantages and the Empire.



“The Pantages,” Rudy’s notes read, “opened at the end of December 1911 and stayed until 1926 at that location. Then the theater was converted into retail space. The Empress opened on December 4, 1910 under the direction of Sid Grauman as a vaudeville house. Later it became a movie theater called the St. Francis. Could it still be there?”

Sid Grauman was a San Francisco wunderkind who got his start here and made his mark elsewhere. The Bijou Dream web site tells of how his introduction to movies at the Cinemagraph Theatre in San Francisco inspired him to open his first two theaters, the Unique and the Lyceum, here. Both were lost in the 'ought-six earthquake and fire. A dauntless promoter, Grauman then bought a big top tent with pews to seat 3,000 from an evangelist and was soon welcoming crowds of 10,000 a day to his theater where “nothing could fall on

you but canvas.” He expanded his empire with new theaters in the Bay Area, including the Empress and Grauman’s Imperial, the first large theater built exclusively for movies. It was at the Empress in 1910 that he first met Charlie Chaplin. In 1917 he sold his San Francisco properties and relocated to Los Angeles, where the following year he opened his Million Dollar Theatre.

A card I recently came across is a Pacific Novelty Co. black and white of the California Theatre, next



door to the Humboldt Bank building at the corner of 4th and Market. The autos on the street make it a '20s view with 1941 handwritten on the back. The building was demolished or has been drastically remodeled into the office building that now occupies the site. I

could find no information about it other than the web site of a woman who occasionally plays its organ—a 1917 Wurlitzer—that is now in a private home in Southern California.

—Lew

**Theater or theatre?* -er is the currently accepted spelling; -re is the spelling the theater owners chose to use.



The Portola [Portolá] Festival of 1909 – A Party With a Purpose

by John T. Freeman See index of Portola [Portolá] Festival postcard images: <http://postcard.org/portola.htm>

When Queen Virgilia of the Portola Festival issued her *Proclamation of Pleasure* just before the opening in October 1909, she said “the festival has twofold significance, not only to celebrate the discovery of San Francisco Bay by Don Gaspar de Portola, but it marks San Francisco’s renaissance from ruin.” In historical retrospect, Queen Virgilia’s list should have more items of significance. The Portola Festival demonstrated to the world that San Francisco had the ability to sponsor a major civic event and it bolstered the city’s case for hosting the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915. It also served to engender respect for the Asian population, becoming the first major civic event enthusiastically supported by both the Chinese and Japanese communities. This first Portola Festival was a wildly successful five-day party, with an innocence and revelry never before seen in the history of San Francisco.

One of the first orders of business in preparation for the 1909 Festival was to decide on a theme that would encourage activities, establish event colors and provide a general structure. Gaspar de Portola’s “discovery” of San Francisco Bay in 1769 was selected as the theme. It was a perfect compliment to the romanticized Mission period fad of the times. During the spring and summer of 1909,

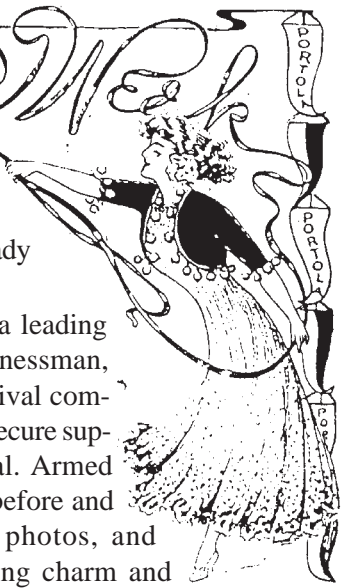
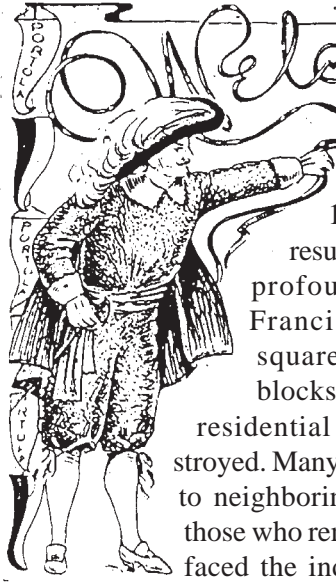
various discovery postcards were issued to publicize the five-day Portola Festival. The official poster and postcard image was chosen, by artist’s competition in June, from a painting by Randall W. Borough. The picture was described as depicting “a girl of the Spanish type seen dancing with all the abandon of the race, her eyes a-sparkle with the excitement of the moment, her red lips parted, roses in her hair, in her hands and strewn around her—the very essence of youthful vitality. In the background is the tower of the ferry building and the structures of the ‘new’ city, and beyond lie the mountains.” The theme honored a Spaniard but presented a problem of pronunciation. Was it to be Por-TOE-la or Por-toe-LA? The *San Francisco Call* reported that Portola committee member James Rolph gave a speech to the Chamber of Commerce the week preceding the opening in which he “varied the accent all along the keyboard.” Linguists and scholars were consulted and it was unanimously agreed that pronunciation “should be a crescendo, ending with a crash on the LA.”



The backers of the 1909 Portola Festival had other agendas besides providing a site for a big party. San Francisco before the earthquake had been a major tourist destination. Its economy was diversified with imports from Asian and other Pacific rim countries, and exports of California’s huge agricultural bounty. It was important to demonstrate to the rest of the world that San Francisco was an exciting destination and to provide confidence to businessmen that the city could handle every commercial challenge. A lot was riding on the success of this festival.



Celebrate Portola



The April 18, 1906 earthquake and resulting three days of fire profoundly changed San Francisco. Almost four square miles, nearly 500 blocks of commercial and residential property, were destroyed. Many San Franciscans fled to neighboring communities, but those who remained

show off their achievement. San Franciscans were ready to celebrate.

Charles C. Moore, a leading San Francisco businessman, was sent by the festival committee to Europe to secure support for the Festival. Armed with a portfolio of before and after photos, and exuding charm and enthusiasm, he was able to get promises from the British, Dutch, Germans and Italians to send warships to participate in the Portola Festival. These were major commitments and raised the level of the festival to international status. With the addition of Japanese and American warships the naval presence in San Francisco Bay was most dramatic. On shore, naval officers and enlisted men would become vital players in the festival. Moore's diplomatic skills were highly praised and within

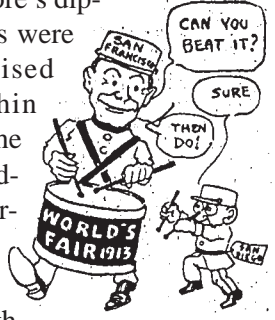
of food lines and temporary shelter. Residents whose homes were spared from fire endured weeks or months cooking in the street while waiting for an inspector to check the condition of their homes' chimneys. The local press—obsessed by governmental corruption, crippling labor strikes and Asian-bashing—did not do much to strengthen the residents' morale. For over three years San Franciscans lived through the grime and dust of rebuilding the city. Downtown was a construction site with all the noise and grit that entails. Gradually, salvageable buildings were restored and new buildings were erected. By 1909 commercial and retail businesses were moving back downtown from their temporary locations on Van Ness Avenue or Fillmore Street. The people who had endured the hardships of those three years deserved a reward. They were justifiably proud of their new city and anxious to



Official Poster that was protested by the WCTU in Portland as being "too revealing and suggestive."

months after the close of the Portola Festival he was heading the Panama Pacific International Exposition commission.

By opening day, October 19th, San Francisco was transformed



NERVE



into a carnival midway from the Ferry Building out into the neighborhoods. In daylight San Francisco was a mass of red and yellow, the Catalonian colors of Portola. Banners, bunting and flags draped buildings and stretched across major streets. With nightfall more than a million lights illuminated downtown, the arched intersections of Fillmore Street and the retail section of Mission Street. The Ferry Building, St. Francis Hotel, Humboldt Savings Bank and other major buildings were outlined in lights. All along Market Street, from the Ferry Building to the Van Ness Avenue intersection, lights were strung curb to curb every forty feet. The most spectacular lighting display was at the intersection of Market and Third Streets where 25,000 colored lights were suspended to form a gigantic bell. In the harbor were seventeen warships also outlined with lights. The entire north end of the peninsula was an awesome display of color by day and lights by night.

Away from the center of downtown, the Portola



Festival held sporting events in Golden Gate Park. Championship matches were played at the tennis courts. Further out, at the Stadium (now called Polo Fields) were track and field competitions, football, rugby and lacrosse matches. There were swimming races held at Spreckels Lake. In the Ingleside area, a major golf tournament was held at the San Francisco Country Club, drawing some of the leading professional and amateur golfers in the country.

For five days festivities of joy and spectacle reigned. There were two days of huge parades with marching military and fraternal units, bands, and floats on Market Street. A formal dress ball and a masked ball were featured on two of the evenings. An automobile parade with 1,600 decorated vehicles wound the lengths of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street. In Oakland 200,000 people cheered auto racers as they sped around a 250 mile course that circled from Melrose to Hayward and back. Every evening of the festival there were fireworks displays in Union Square and a tightrope walker high above Third and Market Streets to awe the crowds. Over the course of five days 75,000 visitors took launches out to tour the warships, with the Japanese vessel leading in popularity. The culmination of the festival was called the Historic Pageant with floats moving along Market Street depicting historical events, surrounded by costumed marchers. Along with the moving floats, were seven immense stationary floats or tableaux.



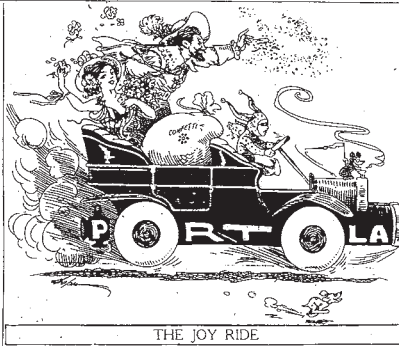
Each was 46 feet long, mounted on rail flatcars and weighed more than 60 tons. Starting at the Ferry Building Plaza, these floats were stationed about two blocks apart along Market Street. All were decked in lights and featured bands and space around them for dancing. Many of these tableaux had cascades of real water to dazzle the crowds.

All week long San Francisco resembled Mardi Gras, but more so on the last night of the festival. Most of the revelers wore costumes, and confetti covered them like a snowstorm. Besides what was thrown by hand, there was a volcano float that spewed out confetti.

After the close of the festival, when the organizing committee and the press evaluated the Portola week, it was rated an unqualified success. Businessmen were effusive in their praise as they calculated that the festival had brought over a million visitors to San Francisco who had spent \$1.5 million. There had been an unprecedented spirit

of cooperation from all segments of the community, but particular note was made of the Asians. After years of vilifying Asians, the San Francisco press praised the Imperial navy and the beauty of the special cherry blossoms it had brought for the Japanese float.

CARNIVAL SPIRIT RULES CITY; VAST CROWDS SURGE IN STREETS



The Chinese community used the Portola Festival as a “coming out” after years of isolation. Chinatown had been rebuilt after the earthquake with tourism in mind. In the festival the Chinese introduced such spectacular floats, lion dancers and dragons, that a rear admiral commented he’d never seen their equal in all his years in Asian

ports. Immediate interest was expressed in making the Portola Festival an annual event, like Mardi Gras in New Orleans or the Mummers Parade in Philadelphia. The press also editorialized about San Francisco having demonstrated to the world that it was ready to host a world’s fair by 1913, to celebrate the anticipated completion of the Panama Canal in that year.

The Portola Festival did not become an annual event. The following year, the festival was co-opted by the sixtieth anniversary of Admission Day. It was restaged in 1913, tying it with Balboa’s discovery of the Pacific Ocean in 1513. In 1948, the third Portola Festival was held in San Francisco to stimulate post-World War II business. Neither of these events approached the vitality and lavishness of the original celebration. The first festival had the spirit of a newlywed’s housewarming party that subsequent celebrations never would equal. See images: <http://postcard.org/portola.htm>



1948

P.S.

PLANS for the club's 2004 calendar are moving apace. Jim Staley, its creator, printer and publisher, has enlisted a couple of helpers this year, and Darlene Thorne has taken her job seriously. She's been calling many of us clubsters wanting to know if we'd like to take part. Has she called you? If not pick up the phone and dial 408 253-2145 to let her know on how many pages or parts thereof you would like to see cards from your collection. Like last year, the calendar will be in full color on heavy paper and can have up to four cards per page. You can take a full page for yourself or share it with other clubsters. Each page costs \$40 and includes four copies of the completed calendar. Four horizontal postcards, three verticals, or one giant horizontal make ideal layouts. If you'd rather not call Darlene, email her at [postcardgirl\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:postcardgirl(at)sbcglobal.net) to arrange for her to get your cards.

PLANS were also made and carried out for George and Helen Epperson's Golden Wedding Anniversary celebration in August. Our heartiest congratulations go to the no longer newlyweds! I'm tempted to wish them another fifty years together, but I'm not sure Helen could endure living with a postcard collector for a full century.

SANDI AND LYNN MAACK emailed in recently to let us know that KQED Channel 9 twice showed the movie *The Plunge; Time Laps Through History* about the Richmond Natatorium, its history and the efforts to save it. Most of the pictures in the film that illustrate the history of Richmond and the era of the Plunge's greatest popularity, come from the Maacks' collection of Richmondabilia, which includes more than 400 postcards of the early town. They were acknowledged, but the

credits flew so fast that Sandi's sure no one but her noticed. "It's a great movie," she writes, "which we hope they will show again... and again."

DISNDAT: The Sonoma County Fair again included postcard collections in its competitively judged exhibits. Three boards were entered. The second and third place winners were beginning amateur efforts, but the blue ribbon went to a first class professional display on the "Resorts of Cazadero." George E. Guilly used a mix of exceptional vintage cards to show the summertime pleasures of the rainiest spot in Sonoma County. Congratz! ... The American Flag exhibit will continue through the end of this month at the Officers' Club in the Presidio. If red, white, and blue are your favorite colors you will love this show even though it includes only a few postcards. See how our national banner evolved from the Revolution, through wars, to the moon and how it survived the attacks of nine-eleven. Admission is free, but you'll want to stop in the book shop for a postcard or two. ... Also free is the entry fee for club members at the new Sunnyvale show. Check the calendar for details. ... If you're a Palace of Fine Arts fan you'll want to know about the lecture series "Secrets of the Palace" with Gary Brechin, author of *Imperial San Francisco*. 7:30 PM on October 21 and November 25, \$15 advance from www.maybeck.org or \$20 at the door.

JUST A QUICK NOTE... Our occasional guest Wayne Nelson sent in a page titled *Postcards Gone A.W.O.L.* copied from an on-line magazine, "The Fortean Times." The most extreme of the snail mail deliveries cited was from Australia to Scotland, 112 years after the card was posted in 1889. A US slowpoke took 47 years to reach Florence Forget in Attleboro, Massachusetts. It was a card her de-



ceased sisters had mailed from Florida in 1952. It had its original 2¢ stamp and cancel and an 11¢ stamp cancelled in 1999. The question for the postal authorities is how did it arrive with only 13¢ postage when the rate was 20¢. The story was also reported in Hong Kong, Melbourne and Malta newspapers except they had Ms. Forget residing in Rawalpindi, India.

Ed Clausen created this unmailable postcard on his word processor to focus our attention on one of Marcel Proust's more focused observations:

A photograph acquires something of the dignity which it ordinarily lacks when it ceases to be a reproduction of reality and shows us things that no longer exist.
Marcel Proust

... and Georgina Pierce wrote in on a multiview modern of Stockton, her home town and the furthest inland deep-water port on the west coast: "It's fun to sail or speed boat or row from Oakland to Stockton on the delta! We get big ships from Japan and Russia and other cool places!"

John Freeman has close to a hundred postcards of the three Portola festivals, and we'll be seeing many of them in his presentation along with cards provided by others in the club. But a bit of empty space gives me a chance to get the drop on them and include a few of my own. Portola cards ran the gamut from elegant to basic and from high quality printing to blurry ones out of registration. From the simple category here is a Portola pennant in red and yellow put out by Pacific Gold-



smith Publishing Co., 255 Kearney Street. Elegance exudes from this vertical that includes Goat



Island, the Call Building and bear, three of my favorite topics. And, from the slightly murky group... Mayor Taylor presenting Don Gaspar de Portola with the key to the city. Can you make out the Japanese dignitary standing behind the mayor? <http://postcard.org/portola.htm> —Lew



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Renewal Individual or Family \$15 Out of USA \$20

Name: _____

Family members: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Collector Dealer Approvals welcome: Yes No

Collecting interests: _____

Please make your check payable to SFBAPCC
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9/03

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(OFFICIAL) POST CARD (PORTOLA
FESTIVAL)

CLUB MEETINGS
for 2003

September 20

October 25

November 22

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