

Beach Boardwalk Celebrates 100th Birthday

by Denise Ward,
for the Aptos Chamber of
Commerce

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is celebrating a milestone 100th birthday this coming summer. The West Coast's only major seaside amusement park attracts more than three million visitors a year.

Dubbed the "Coney Island of the West" during the early part of the 20th century, its popularity was perhaps second only to New York's famous amusement park. The Boardwalk's remarkable history also includes the first Miss California pageants, the greatest of the big bands, and a collection of daring performers who flew through the air, sometimes on fire, giving beach goers the thrill of a lifetime.

When the Boardwalk was built, going to the seashore was considered healthy, and taking "sea baths" was beneficial to the body. Eventually Santa Cruz developed a reputation as a resort town complete with a casino.

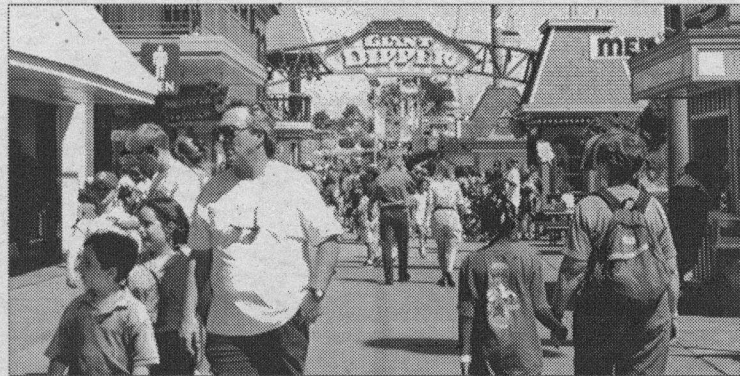
In those days a casino was a place for entertainment and a place to win prizes. No gambling was done there. In 1908 an attraction was constructed called the "Scenic Railway."

The Boardwalk's first "thrill ride" accelerated to a whopping 25 mph. In 1911 the carousel was built and installed in its current location. Two chariots were built for the women who for modesty's sake did not sit upon the horses. The 73 carved and bejeweled horses have been painstakingly restored over the years.

Those familiar with the carousel know about the ring-dispensing machine that adds a bit of a challenge to the ride. Brass rings used to entitle riders who nabbed one to a free

ride. Now they are tossed into the mouth of a clown a few feet away and cause the clown's eyes to light up. The Carousel is one of the two national landmarks on the property. The Giant Dipper is the other one.

Arthur Looff who created the rickety, wooden, roller coaster, once said that the ride's design was intended to evoke a "combination earthquake, balloon ascension, and aeroplane drop." It was built in



just 47 days in 1924 at a cost of \$50,000.

In the building where Neptune's Kingdom miniature golf course now stands was the "Boardwalk Plunge," an enormous, indoor saltwater pool. Marq Lipton, Vice President of Marketing for the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, was the guest speaker at the March Aptos Chamber Breakfast.

After presenting some wonderful slides of the behind-the-scenes operations there, he described some of the upcoming events planned to celebrate this cherished landmark's centennial.

The Boardwalk will host free performances of the Moscow Circus and have an outdoor screening of the film "Lost Boys." There are plans for a gala, concerts, shows, and for the first time since 1974, fireworks will return to the Boardwalk.

Community Enhancement

Gary Smith presented The Community Enhancement Award to Sergeant Shea John-

son of the Aptos Sheriff's Office and Coast Commercial Bank. Their collaborative efforts to eliminate graffiti on community property have been funded by Coast Commercial Bank's first donation to the cause of \$500.

Aptos History Museum Fundraiser Planned

Serverino's at the Best Western Seaciff Inn will be hosting a Dining for History evening

Apr. 20. A portion of the proceeds from dinners sold will support the Aptos History Museum.

The museum is a wonderful resource for our community and operates solely through dues and donations. Parties of five or more should make reservations by calling 831-688-8987. For membership information please contact the museum at 831-688-9514.

There will also be two history walks in April led by museum founder John Hibble. On Apr. 19 the walk will be in Nicene Marks, and on Apr. 28 the second walk at Seaciff Beach is planned.

Business Showcase

February was the month for showcasing products and services to the community at the Capitola Mall.

Working in partnership, the Aptos and Capitola Soquel Chambers organized a Business Showcase for businesses in the area to exhibit and network.

Thousands of people

attended. Thanks to Woodworm Party Store and Alexis Party Rental, the Mall was transformed into a festive and colorful venue. The food court was a big hit and excellent meeting place where vendors and guests could mingle and taste the culinary delights of such local restaurants as Michael's on Main and Papa O's while sipping wine from local Santa Cruz Mountains wineries.

We thank our Presenting sponsors: The Capitola Mall, Monterey Credit Union, and PG&E. Premier Sponsors: Mapleton Communications, KSBW, Entravision Communications, MAGIC 63, Clear Channel Radio, Michael's on Main, M! Fatik Graphic Company, KWAV, Jammin' 97.9; plus all of our Event Sponsors: Aly Almira of Bailey Properties, Best Western Seaciff Inn, Severino's Grill, Adworks for the Central Coast, Grey Wolf Computers, Woodworm Party Store, Sign Services, *Metro Santa Cruz*, *The Mid-County Post*, *Register Pajaronian*, *Woodland Financial Wellness*, *Wachovia Home Loans*, *Seascape Resort*, *North County Towing*, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, *Printworx*, *Alexis Party Rental*, *Valley Yellow Pages*, *KSCO/KOMY*, *The Times Publishing Group*, *Stevens Creek BMW*, *Dominican Hospital*, and *Coast Commercial Bank*. Thank you all for your generous support!

April Aptos Chamber Breakfast

Please join the community in welcoming the interim chancellor of UCSC George Blumenthal. He will be the guest speaker at the Apr. 12 breakfast meeting at the Best Western Seaciff Inn from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members. Please call 831-688-1467 for reservations.

Farewell to Ray Belgard

On Mar. 13 the community said goodbye to Ray Belgard (July 20, 1930 – March 1, 2007) at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. More than 500 people came to pay their respects to this wonderful citizen. His distinguished career as a public servant spanned over a period of 50 years. He served in the navy and was an inspector for the District Attorney's Offices of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

From 1982 to 1988 he was the chief of police for the Watsonville Police Department followed by an eight-year term as the Fourth District supervisor for Santa Cruz County. He served on countless boards and commissions throughout his life and gave tirelessly to the community.

Cafe Rio is Under New Ownership

We welcome Cafe Rio's new proprietors, Chef Jeffrey Briggs and his wife Jackie Wilson to Rio Del Mar. Jeff has been interested in all things culinary since his early years when he had "cafeteria duty" as a grade school student.

His skills were honed at Columbia College in California, and he has worked in many restaurants in the Sacramento area since then. They are happy to be located in Aptos where Jeff spent his summers vacationing as a child.

Patrons of Cafe Rio will see some subtle changes in menu. Vegetables will be included with the entrees and Jeff will be featuring braised pork, which is one of his personal favorites. Sunday brunch will also be served in the near future.

We would like to wish the former owner, Patrick Duggan, well as he moves on after 28 years of owning and managing Cafe Rio. Thank you for all of the ways that you served your community. ■