



Photos by Bill Lovejoy

Fourth of July raises Don Kriege's patriotic side.

A house turns 100

Historic City House

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Capitola boarding house went by many names

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BACK IN THE olden days, "Camp" Capitola was a fashionable spot for campers from San Francisco to San Jose to escape the summer heat.

The many campgrounds in Capitola, with their seasonal tents, gave way eventually to tents with wooden floors, then summer cottages and finally, summer homes.

The Victorian house located at 202 Cherry Ave. is not one of the first dwellings built in Capitola. However, according to current resident Norma Kriege, chairperson of Capitola Planning Commission, it was the first one built as a year-round residence rather than a summer home.

That was in 1887.

On Saturday, Dan and Norma Kriege will celebrate the 100th birthday of their renovated Victorian showpiece with a lawn party and open house for friends, relatives and Capitola city officials.

"One of our friends from Detroit is bringing two flags," Norma said. "One flew over the White House and has a letter from Ronald Reagan to go with it. The other flew over the State Capitol and has a letter from Governor Deukmejian."

The flags are a surprise for her husband, who likes flags and flagpoles, she said.

For Christmas one year, the family bought him a flagpole as a gift and stealthily installed it overnight. Both flags will fly from that pole Saturday, in front of the home which has been at the corner of Cherry Street and San Jose Avenue for a century.

The Victorian home has a sketchy history. It was built out of redwood brought into Capitola, which served as a main harbor for redwood and fir timber.

But details of who built it and for whom are hazy. The Kriege family thinks, but isn't sure, that the man who commissioned the home was wealthy thanks to his Pennsylvania mining business. Once the house was built, however, he decided against moving in.

It was used as a boardinghouse until about 1910, when it was divided into apartments. Norma thinks that date is accurate because extra apartment units added to the structure date from around that time.

At first called Home Apartments, it was run by a Miss Annie Packard from at least the mid-20s until the mid-40s, when it was purchased by a Virginia contrac-

tor, James E. Cregor. He eventually changed the name to Cregor Apartments, and the name remained until 1970. It became the Victorian Apartments until 11 years ago when the Kriege and Dan Kriege's sister bought it with visions of remodeling.

"It was basically in very good shape," Norma said. "The former owner redid all the plumbing and rewiring. But we always have to keep ahead of the termites" — a common problem with old homes in the area.

Still, it was good enough to enable them to start right in on the what she called "the icing" — that is, decorating the interior and exterior of the home.

The outside is painted cream, with cobalt trim. The blue, mauve and white interior keeps the Victorian motif alive, along with antiques furniture, ruffled upholstery and curtains, and a kitchen which, though modernized, looks a great deal as it must have in the Victorian era.

"This is my great-grandfather," Norma said, indicating a large, framed engraving of a little boy.

Rolltop desks in the office open to reveal a computer and a copy machine. Antique wall cabinets in the family room hide state-of-the-art TV and stereo equipment.

"All of our decadence is hidden," she said.

All except one of the antiques in the home are pieces from fourth-generation Californian Norma's side of the family. The lone exception belonged to actress Mary Astor, who sold her furniture when she remodeled her Los Angeles home. Norma's grandmother brought the small table north.

The third floor affords a view of the ocean from the master bedroom, which Norma said was quite small until a wall was ripped out to give extra space. That portion of the house was a originally a series of cupolas, which the Kriege had to repair.

The house isn't the first they've renovated. They also fixed up a Victorian farmhouse in the "Jewel Box" section of the city, so named because the streets are named after gems. The farmhouse is located at the corner of 49th Avenue and Emerald Street.

But 202 Cherry Ave. is fairly well known; it was featured in Monterey Life magazine in 1985. It's also listed fourth on the Capitola Historic Walking Tour as "an interesting collection of design and add-ons." The city of Capitola lists the structure as one of about 250 historically significant buildings in the city.

The main unit of the home on the second and third floors is where the Kriege live; they're still renovating



Norma Kriege preserved gingerbread.

the satellite apartment units. It's an ongoing process, Norma said.

When that's finished, they'll find another home and rejuvenate it, they say.

But they have no plans to move out. Last year, Dan and Norma bought out Dan's sister's interest in the home with plans to stay. In view of their convenient location, close to downtown and the beach, it sounds like a wise idea.

"It's hard to leave Capitola, especially when you have your own garage," Norma said.