

Clubs + Rooms

YWCA To Mark 50th Year With A Tea

Santa Cruz YWCA will mark its 50th anniversary with a reception and tea Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. as the first of two events this week.

At the tea past and present staff members, board members and presidents will be honored.

On Friday, October 17, a potluck dinner will be held at 6 p.m. at the Y, 303 Walnut Avenue, with interested persons invited to bring food to share with six or eight persons. For more information call the Y at 426-3062. There is no charge for either event.

Sue Foster, president of the current YWCA board of directors, asks that all persons in the community and vicinity who were members of the following groups which are no longer in existence, come and renew friendships with the past:

Girl Reserves, Blue Triangle Club, Junior League of the YWCA, Business Girls Club, Las Munecas, Marri-Eds (formerly part of the YWCA), the Oldsters Club and the International Club.

"A warm welcome awaits them all," Sue says.

"Memories of the Santa Cruz YWCA" have been written up by Dorothy Binsacca, taken from notes on a talk given at the annual Y meeting, January 31, 1972.

Excerpts from these "Memories" follow.

Dorothy, who came to Santa Cruz High as head of the girls' physical ed department in 1925, helped found the Girl Reserve Club with the aid of Mrs. Palmer and board members who included members of the following well-known local families: McPherson, Norris, Byrne and Hinds.

Girl Reserves were the Y's primary focus for the first few years of its existence, she points out. They met in an old red barn behind a home on the corner of Mission and Walnut Avenue.

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The years 1928-29 brought the girls' gym and clubroom at the high school where meetings were then conducted.

In 1930-31 it was time to expand the Y to take in women and younger girls. A Western YWCA representative came to help with the expanded program and a Monterey Bay District was formed which included Watsonville and Santa Cruz.

Dorothy married the late Sam Binsacca and retired from teaching to raise a family. Helen Calkins, Dorothy's assistant, took over to head the high school girls' physical ed department.

In 1940-42, Dorothy and Sam's two boys were in school and she found more time to become active again in the Y. She was elected district president and spearheaded the drive to obtain Santa Cruz Y's own building and own director.

Blanche Clark became the first Santa Cruz YWCA president; Leila Sullivan, vice president; Jessie Richardson, secretary; Edith Burt, treasurer, and Dorothy herself became financial secretary.

Using school facilities, a summer recreation program was started. A Little Theater was directed by Grace Fennimore Cooper with Leila Sullivan and Decla Fuller helping. These recreation programs were so successful that the City of Santa Cruz took them over and established its recreation program from them.

In 1943 the local Y purchased the Fachuter home, its present location, for \$12,500. The grand opening followed in 1944 after much re-painting and decorating. Ups and downs followed with — finally, Dorothy says, the mortgage burning in 1952 when "The Y building was ours!"

The Y program and membership flourished through the 40s and 50s followed by a downward trend noticeable in the latter part of the 50s

due to a combination of circumstances, some of them national.

In 1963 Hulda McLean was persuaded to take the then vacant position of YWCA Executive Director until a permanent director could be found. Hulda had had experience in financing and administering character-building agencies and she had served two terms as a Santa Cruz County supervisor.

In 1965 when Mary McDill took over as executive director, she came to a sound and active organization.

Some of the local people who worked and helped, took active positions in building the Y included: Mayte McPherson and Edith Harter, district presidents; Helen Scott Stone, first district executive; Jane Ball, last district executive; Helen Calkins, Girl Reserve advisor; Dorothy Binsacca, last Girl Reserve board president and last district Y president; Bertha Adams, Caddie Cook, Nellie Newlove, Ora Stoodley and Laura Stanley. In addition to those mentioned, others who helped with finances included: Clara Pearson, Grace Grimas, Bertha Edmond, Hannah Campbell, Marion Shenk, Jessie Richardson, Eva Gillette, Jean Foster, Beth Jacoby, Marjorie Brunjes, Teela Haas, Kate Cunnison, Mayre Hall, Barbara Hoke, Ada Jane Leamy...and as Dorothy says in her "Memories," many many more.

