



THE HAL



#4

NEWSLETTER FOR THE VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF OF ANGEL ISLAND STATE PARK



The Surrey Special Edition

Surrey

Surrey has had an amazing impact on Angel Island. I first met her when I became a docent in 1998. By then, she had invented the Victorian House Tours, which was an annual fundraiser for many years. Later, she created the Jazz and Spaghetti extravaganzas at the Fort McDowell Chapel and Victorian Christmas and initiated the idea of the current Angel Lights Countdown. These events not only raised money for the Association, they enhanced visitors' experiences and understanding of the island's role in history.

Surrey loved doing first person interpretation, and she recreated a number of island characters including Isabella Perle, a Quarantine Station nurse, Mother Christmas, and several other Victorian Era ladies. Surrey also was instrumental for many years in building up and fostering the Volunteers in Parks program. Under her direction, nearly 20,000 volunteer hours were recorded yearly, and volunteer participation in the docent training program and a couple picnics each year was very strong.

Surrey worked closely with the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, actively supporting their efforts to get National Historic Landmark recognition, as well as participating in their various visioning workshops as the efforts to improve USIS got started in earnest after that designation.

In her role as president of the Angel Island Association and later Executive Director, Surrey started the 'scholarship' program where corporations funded Island trips and tours for low income students. As part of this effort, she created the Explorers Tour for younger students and to utilize Ayala Cove more. She expanded the gift shop from a cart to an open window to today's shop, which seems palatial compared to its predecessors!

She also conjured up funding and state park approval for new interpretive signs all around the island. When the AIA participated in the Marin Human Race, there was a booth contest, which Surrey roped me into. She talked me into a

costume (first and only time) and we actually won a prize for best booth.

Surrey had amazing energy and ideas and a willingness to learn from her experiences and adapt programs to attract more people, reduce expenses, and generate more funds. She often said that if you turned over the island, it would say 'this belongs to Surrey' underneath and she put her enthusiasm where her heart was. The island will not be the same without her.

Lynn Eichinger



Surrey

I had the pleasure to know Surrey Blackburn in a couple different contexts, and she was always a delight to my heart and soul. For many years I have worked in stage management at the annual Dickens Christmas Fair, held at the Cow Palace in Daly City. This was my first opportunity to get to know Surrey. She played many roles over the year, but in the last few, her signature role had become Miss Haversham, the elderly jilted bride from Dickens' classic,

Great Expectations.

The character is a woman so heartbroken at being left at the alter as a young girl, that she wears her wedding dress everyday into her elder years. As are many of Dickens' characters, she is a blend of comedy and pathos, and Surrey managed to capture this wonderfully. She would cruise the fair, delighting patrons with her portrayal of a delusional woman with a sharp wit still intact. As the Fair's Stage Manager, I loved working with her, and would lovingly refer to her character as "my favorite little crack pot."



When I started working on the island, two and a half years ago, I had no idea of Surrey's history here until one day when I opened the door of the cabinet in the Bake House and found her staring back at me, much to my surprise and delight. All right, it wasn't actually Surrey in the cabinet, but an article about her retirement as Executive Director of the Angel Island Association (now the Angel Island Conservancy). Looking around my new office in the following weeks, I found even more evidence of her presence here in the form of the many photographs she took, some of them of her husband, Gregor in living history gear. Shortly after that, Surrey and Gregor and I had a chance to talk and connected in mutual love of Angel Island. It was my great honor and privilege to be able to facilitate her last endeavor

in the park, which was working in the Bake House as a baker for the Environmental Living Program, where she delighted both children and adults with her knowledge and passion for Angel Island. She will be forever felt here, and forever missed.

Teri Pope

Surrey

"Best thing that happened to Angel Island. A promoter, public relations, and volunteer recruiter. Best Brit 4 a Ginny!"

"Liked people. People liked her. Her job a fit!!! I will miss her red hair (I suspect white), her crooked tooth smile, and most of all her command of the English language."

Requiem in Pace.

Jerry McEowen



I recently contacted filmmaker Felicia Lowe, and asked if she would like to share any memories of her time working with Surrey, here's what she shared:

"It's the photo I wished I had taken with Surrey when I had lunch with her a couple of months ago at Ocean Beach. We were asked to take a photo of two young women and I thought, in passing, I should ask them to take our photo. Then the moment passed. While the photo would be fun to have, that day we spent together talking about what gave us joy will be long remembered.

Our friendship was forged through planning events and docent trainings at the Immigration Station, particularly the National Historic Landmark celebration which created a strong bond of mutual respect and admiration. She was one special lady and I'll miss her cheerful, generous spirit."

Felicia Lowe

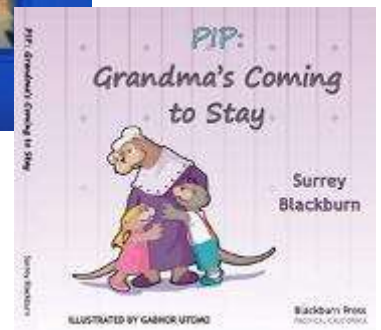
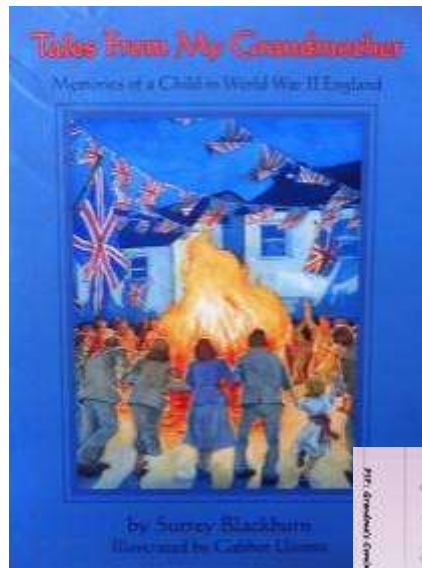
A Recent Post on Facebook

Surrey Blackburn's most recent book "Pip: Grandma's Coming to Stay" has just been awarded the Best Educational Children's Book for 2012 by the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association. This is the second time BAIPA has honored Surrey's work.

Her first book, "Tales From My Grandmother", published through the Blackburn Press, was a collection of stories about growing up in England during and after the Second World War and BAIPA recognized "Tales" as the Best Juvenile History Book, and Best Illustrations of a Children's Book for 2011. In the last five years, Surrey has written books for children. "Pip: Grandma's Coming to Stay" is the first in her "All In Our Family" series of books for the pre-kindergartener about stressful times in the life of a family.

I know Surrey would have been immensely proud and pleased to receive this most recent honor from BAIPA.

Our Wonderful Diamond keeps on sparkling.



Article from the original THE HALO. February 2005



THE HALO

ANGEL ISLAND ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 2005

Supporting Volunteers and Preservation for Angel Island State Park

VOLUNTEER CORNER

PLEASE CALL 415-435-3522 x9, or send email to caseyal@att.net to sign up for any of the openings listed below. Also visit <http://ajastaff.home.att.net/volunteering.htm>

Feel free to drop by and open your favorite site on nice weekends.

IMMIGRATION STATION

Feb 12

Mar 20,26

CAMP REYNOLDS

Cannon - Feb 5

OVERNIGHT HOST

Mar 12, 19, 26*

Apr 15, 16, 22,23,29,30

May 14,21

June 4, 18,25*

July 9,16, 23

Aug 13

Sept 17

Oct 8, 22

Nov 19

* host is asked to stay in Bake House instead of Q10.

REMEMBER!

The Café is closed and the ferries are on their winter schedules.

SURREY BLACKBURN RETIRES AS AIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



After 5 ½ years leading the Angel Island Association, Surrey Blackburn has decided to pursue other interests. Surrey has been a major part of the island since 1988, when the AIA president at the time asked her to create photos for a new visitor's brochure. Once she made it onto the island, she adopted it as her own and has spent nearly 20 years putting her mark on it. We are pleased that she intends to continue as a volunteer—Angel Island wouldn't be the same without Surrey and her many faces.

Prior to becoming Executive Director in 1999, Surrey had unofficially filled that role in her several terms as board president. She saw the AIA through the dark days of financial problems in the early 90's, when all the other board members resigned due to a complex legal situation. She rebuilt the board with docents and then when she became Executive Director, expanded the board to include others from the community who weren't docents.

She is the architect of many programs on the island, including the popular Explorer's Tour, Victorian House Tours, Dinner and Jazz, and Victorian Christmas Open House. She has been a prime contributor to docent training for many years.

She used the expanded gift shop space to re-invent the inventory and significantly increased Association revenues from sales. When the holiday tree had problems, Surrey appealed to Industrial Light and Magic to give a new electrical system and brighter lights – and then when the mountain top went back on, she appealed to them again for a new lighter weight tree that could be hand-carried to the top.

She assisted the AIISF in pursuing National Landmark status for the Immigration Station. This effort would have been more challenging without Surrey's help. (Continued on back page; more photos, page 3)



2005 EVENTS

2/26/05 - 4/9/05 Docent Training (No training Easter weekend)
 4/10 Docent Graduation
 6/11,12 Civil War Days
 8/6, 7 House Tours
 10/2 Annual Meeting
 11/12,13 Victorian Xmas

Casey Lee, Volunteer Coordinator

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To receive the Halo online, email haloeditor@angelisland.org.
 Go to <http://ajastaff.home.att.net> for the Halo, updates of volunteer needs, events, and the latest news and photos.

SURREY BLACKBURN

Continued from page 1

Recently, she led the development of the AIA's newest book, *Kai's Journey to Gold Mountain*, a wonderful addition to the interpretive materials supplied by the AIA.

Surrey helped the AIA forge strong relationships with various park superintendents and partner organizations, such as the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (AIISF), and Environmental Traveling Companions. A few years ago, the AIISF recognized her contributions to their organization during their annual fund-raising dinner.

Surrey also reached out to donors and corporations and created travel scholarships for disadvantaged students, allowing them to take field trips to Angel Island they could not have otherwise afforded. She kicked off the mule barn restoration project. When that was delayed, she found other sources of funds and led the effort to replace and expand on the interpretive signs around the island. There are often challenges accomplishing projects in the park, and Surrey's persistence and creativity have made the difference time after time.

Surrey often has said that if you lifted up Angel Island and looked underneath, it would say, 'this belongs to Surrey'. She has dedicated over 7,000 volunteer hours (and probably more than that if she had recorded them all) to Angel Island.

Thanks more than we can say, Surrey, for all your efforts and devotion to the island over the years. We look forward to seeing you here for many years to come.



There are so many positive and happy things I can remember about my time working with Surrey on the island, but what stands out the most to me is her personal kindness to me and my family. Every year we opened our home to visitors as part of the Victorian House Tours which Surrey really loved to do. It was a lot of work, but everyone enjoyed working to make all the places on the island welcoming to visitors.



After five years as the Superintendent, my family and I moved down to San Luis Obispo. As a professional photographer, Surrey took the time to completely and artistically photograph our entire home with little vignettes of what our home looked like and presented it to us as a captured memory of our special time there. What a thoughtful, touching and meaningful gift and we all treasure that album as a captured moment of our family's life on the island. I will always treasure that as a memory of Surrey and what she meant to me and to the island.

Nick Franco

District Superintendent
San Luis Obispo Coast District

Surrey was one of my favorite people and she had an amazing ability to make you think that you were the only one in the room. I started learning from Surrey when I came to Angel Island in 2000, she was the Executive Director of the Angel Island Association (now Angel Island Conservancy) and spearheaded many of the special events in the park (Dinner & Jazz, Victorian House Tours and Victorian Christmas especially) working along with park staff and volunteers. Surrey also created the Explorers tour for young students to learn about the pre-history and early European days on Angel Island. Her enthusiasm and dedication were infectious and without parallel.

After attending the memorial for Surrey at the end of June, I learned that all of that was just the tip of iceberg. Over 200 people, wearing fabulous hats and Union Jacks to honor Surrey's English origins, came to remember Surrey and the impact she had on their lives. She was a wife, mom, grandmother, teacher, writer, actor, singer, photographer, volunteer and so much more. Her husband, twin daughters and each of her five grandchildren spoke or performed a musical piece to honor Surrey. She has left a grand legacy.

Surrey and her husband Gregor were the photographers for my husband and me when we married two years ago. As friends, they took pictures and gave us the digital images for hors devours and a glass of wine. Every time I look at those pictures on the wall I'm reminded of the wonderful lady on the other side of the camera. She will be missed.

We plan to have an on island gathering in the future when Surrey's family is able to attend. When a date is selected we will let you know.

Casey Dexter-Lee



An Interpretive Moment

By Teri Pope, *Interpreter I*

RELEVANCE- SO WHAT?

We are always told to make our interpretive efforts relevant. But that is not always easy. Relevant to who? The short answer is, of course, all of them! But how do we know if we are reaching that audience?

I would like to provide you with an easy “acid test” by which to judge your interpretive offerings. It is something I learned from a community college instructor many years ago, and it’s called the “So What?” test. This professor believed that, because he was paid through taxpayer funds, that all of his students (or as he called us, his Employers) should be able to ask him, “so what?” in response to anything he was teaching. In other words, “how is this relevant to this class?” If he couldn’t show how, he felt he wasn’t doing his job and would throw out that lecture.

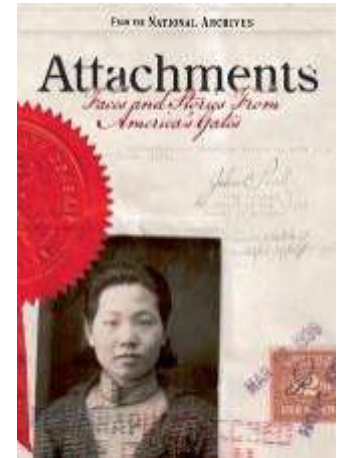
This strikes me as a great test for our interpretive mandate to present information that is relevant to our audiences. Challenge them to ask you, “So what?” If you can’t show them how your presentation or exhibit or demonstration is relevant to them, you may need to make some adjustments! Is this an easy thing? No, of course not.

Giving up a part of your presentation may be very hard, especially if it is something near and dear to your own heart. But it will make your interpretation better in the long run, and that is always a good thing!



Reading List

Attachments: Faces and Stories from America's Gates
From the National Archives



The National Archives recently opened a new exhibit in Washington titled “Attachments: Faces and Stories from America’s Gates”.

“Attachments” tells the stories of 31 men, women, and children who found themselves at the gateways to America between 1880 and the end of World War II. Their stories are told through original documents and photographs that were “attached” to government forms, and draw from a few of the millions of immigration case files at the National Archives.

The exhibition explores both physical and emotional “attachments” -- the attachment of immigrants to family and community, and the attachment of Americans to their beliefs about immigrants and citizenship.

Accompanying this incredible exhibit is the recently released book of the same name. The book has wonderful imagery from pulled from files of those who passed through America’s most well-known “gates.” This book will definitely prove to be another amazing resource for anyone looking to better understand the struggle and world that immigrants faced when coming to this country.

We hope to have this publication available for purchase here on the Island in the very near future. A copy of the book is available at the Immigration Station for everyone to see.



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