



# Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”  
Volume 16: Number 3 March 2009

## It Was a Merry February!

Our February meeting was a buzz of activity and excitement. One of my favorite activities returned – a program by one of our talented members. Chick Storey did a terrific job of showing display techniques which all of us could incorporate into our own displays. Chick began with a demonstration of a way to create your own trees. He used small branches and attached greenery that he had purchased at Michael's. He cut leaves from silk and plastic picks or garlands; then he glued clusters of the leaves onto the branches. He showed us that we could stick the base of the tree into Styrofoam or add a nail to make it more stable. We loved it when he cannibalized a tree arrangement, which Maggie had purchased for him. From the arrangement, he saved the base to use as a well or pool, the rock and wood “trunk” to place in his forest, and the leaves to use in other tree creations.

After showing us a way to make trees, Chick demonstrated a technique for forming mountains. He was able to do some recycling by using Styrofoam scraps as the base for his mountain and old newspapers as the understructure for the mountainsides. Over these, he placed dampened plaster cloth. The technique was similar to a papier-mâché process but much cleaner, and it dried in about 20 minutes. Thanks, Chick, for a great program!

There was plenty of interest in the nominations for Collector of the Year. 19 members submitted nominations, honoring the following 13 Nominees:

Shirley Bechtel  
Bob Dallow  
Lauren Murphy  
Winnie Sage

Marge Bramfeld  
Mary Marshall  
Bob O'Connor  
Sharon Swildens

David Bechtel  
Vern Brown  
Jim Murphy  
Jon Sage  
Millie Warner

Voter Pamphlets with copies of every nomination were sent to all members with e-mail addresses. There will also be copies at the next meeting on **March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM**. At that meeting, all members (Dues must be up to date) in attendance will receive their ballots to vote for Collector of the Year. The winner will be announced at the end of the meeting. On the program that night will be H-O-U-S-E games, presented by Bob O'Connor. See you there.

Jon

**MINDLESS MUTTERING...**

*...by Bob O'Connor*

I was going to take advantage of my position as editor of the Village Views to solicit your votes for me as collector of the year. However there are at least four very strong contenders that I am considering voting for (no, I won't say who.) I will wait to see what the nominators have to say about each of the thirteen nominees before I make my final decision. I was frankly surprised in the number of people nominated but even then there were several names glaringly missing. Hey, with the criteria left wide open to the nominator to decide who is eligible the entire club could conceivably have been up for the award. I can't think of a single member of our club who at some time has not done something that would earn the nod for him or her. No matter who you nominated, remember the winner will go on to compete for the national title of Collector of the Year so it behooves us all to vote for the one person capable of bringing the national award home to the San Diego Fifty Sixers. Just being nominated is a great honor and one I will cherish as I am sure the other nominees will. My ego won't allow me to withdraw from the selection process, but I do take the stand that there are several other nominees more qualified for the honor. I leave it up to you to determine who.



**Raffle Prizes**

**From Canterbury Gardens:**  
Knickerbocker Flag Company.....Esther Erdell

**From Casual Living:**  
\$50.00 Gift Certificate .....Lauren Murphy

**From City Lights:**  
Santa Street Lights.....Lauren Murphy  
Village Straight Fence.....Michelle Brown  
Windmill Wishing Well.....Winnie Sage

**From The Mole Hole:**  
Mickey Mouse Watch Factory.....Millie Warner

**From the SD 56ers:**  
Barton's Holiday Greens.....Claire Caldwell

***Be sure to thank the vendors who support our club with their donations.***

**DOOR PRIZES – Contributed by Lisa Johnson from Dept. 56**

New England Village Sign, Dave Bechtel; Decorative Plate, Karen Boynton; Our Best Vintage, Sir, Marge Bramfeld; The First House that Love Built, Bob O'Connor; Just for You – Snow Baby, Esther Erdell; One Choo Choo Burger Coming Up, Karen Boynton; Decorative Candle Holder, Annie Dallow; Wall Hanging, Claire Caldwell; Chicken, Jonathan Sage.

<b>SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS' OFFICERS</b>		
President	Jon Sage	858-484-2533
Vice-President	Lauren Murphy	619-669-4949
Rec. Secretary	Annie Dallow	949-498-1356
Treasurer	Les Boynton	858-748-4291
Corr. Secretary	Shirley Bechtel	(858)549-2077
Publicity	Marge Bramfeld	(619)691-8424
Historian	Claire Caldwell	619-280-1048
Parliamentarian	Bob Dallow	949-498-1356
Hospitality	Mary Marshall	619-262-0351
Membership	Winnie Sage	858-484-2533
Past President	Karen Boynton	858-748-4291
Village Views	Bob O'Connor	760-789-3957

## **Chick brings back memories**

Last month when Chick Storey presented a program on village display details it awoke thoughts of times past when other members of the San Diego Fifty Sixers shared secrets and techniques they had learned elsewhere with us. I recall many of these programs and will hereby remind you of some of them. If I miss anyone it is only because I am doing this from memory.

Winnie Sage gave a demonstration on carving mountains from Styrofoam using common kitchen gadgets. She included a segment on lighting areas of your display with spotlights and how to hide them with landscaping. Of course the landscaping was also part of her tutorial, using many stems and branches from Michael's to create trees at a much lower cost than ready-made foliage.

Vern Brown showed a way to make simple and inexpensive palm trees for your Holy Land displays. He also showed several different ways to make a cultivated field look realistic in miniature. Haystacks were another creation Vern shared with us along with corn stalks for your Thanksgiving or Halloween display.

Speaking of Halloween, no one does it better than Jim Murphy. Jim has given several instructional programs including making spooky Halloween trees. His expertise in cutting Styrofoam was demonstrated several times and includes a technique of making stairways that seem almost too easy to be good. He also demonstrated lighting methods bypassing factory offerings.

When it comes to lighting and electrical problems, Dave Bechtel has given a seminar on both easy lighting methods and safety criteria for our villages. Dave has shown us how to add lighting to buildings or accessories that come without any by using LED lights.

Patti Burdick took us on a trip down memory lane (or at least a way for us to create our own) with her scrap booking knowledge. She demonstrated ways to save pictures of our past creations in books worthy of sharing with anyone.

Bob O'Connor has given demonstrations on carving Styrofoam, building platforms for our villages, and mountains so real you would think you were there in person. His mountains are created from a product called geodesic foam and are best seen in the mountains of Jim Murphy's Halloween display. Bob says Jim is an example of the student surpassing the teacher.

Even Bob Dallow who admits to making nothing for his village (he says he buys everything) gave a short demonstration on how to eliminate the intrusive battery boxes that come with many of our accessories.

These are only a few of the many programs presented by our members, several of whom have also given seminars at Department 56 national gatherings. At this point I wonder how many other members have ideas or techniques they can share with us to make our displays better or easier to create. Maybe you have a little secret method or shortcut you can divulge to your friends. You needn't do a complete program; show what you know in a little "show and tell" presentation at any regular meeting. Take a minute of our time and become a hero to your club.

# Collectively Speaking

...BY BOB DALLOW

And so we continue. This month we'll take a look at the new releases in the two oldest collections – Snow Village and Dickens' Village. In April we'll visit Christmas in the City and

North Pole, ending our tour just in time for the midyear releases in May. Is there no stop to this madness?



Typically **SNOW VILLAGE** has the most releases, and that's the case once again this year with 8 new buildings and 10 accessories. Starting in 1990 with the Queen Anne Victorian, there has been a subseries within Snow Village – the American Architecture Series. *Colonial Revival* (left) is the sixteenth release in this collection. This architectural style was spurred by the patriotic fever that accompanied America's centennial in 1876. At its peak it supplanted the

Victorian period and led into the Bungalow house style. The symmetrical style features double-hung windows trimmed with shutters, and is constructed of brick and wood siding with a gabled roof. For some reason, Department 56 defines *Unfair Advantage* as an accompanying accessory. The connection is vague at best as it is simply a snowball fight scene.

*Marjorie's Blue Ribbon Baked Goods* is a tribute to a baking legend in the Twin Cities area. She has won 1000s of blue ribbons at state fairs and is depicted in the accessory *Blue Ribbon Treats* presenting cookies to three children. The building certainly resembles a country store more than it does a residence. Continuing with our culinary trip, we turn next to *White Castle*, a replica of the famous hamburger restaurant that originated in Kansas in 1921. The familiar white square building is accompanied by a boy and girl carrying away their goodies. *Rolling Acres Corn Maze* is a set of two from the Fall Harvest series. There are two small structures, each of which is LED lit. The included accessory is *Popping the Kettle Corn*. Harvest decorations abound in the small scene which could serve as a stand alone vignette.

Churches abound in Snow Village. Despite that, another is on its way. *Our Lady of Grace Church* is a fairly traditional house of worship. It has stained glass windows and a rose window above the front door. A statue of Saint Mary appears in the steeple tower. To celebrate the holiday season, two children are *Making Luminaries*. It has been seven years since the last school was introduced, and *Northgate School* fills that void. It is certainly the most modern educational complex in the ceramic community. The two story structure includes a flag flying above the school's name. Waiting at the bus stop are two pupils carrying *Gifts For The Teacher*. Main Street adds *Rose's Flower Shop*, a building that seems to have been converted from a residence to a retail establishment. It is surrounded by a variety of plants and flowers that are for sale. *I Hope She Likes Them* are the thoughts of a boy and his father as they head home with gifts for Mom. This year's addition to Christmas Lane is the *Dancing Lights House* which includes a spectacular music and light show synchronizing "Deck The Halls" with flashing lights which trim the roofline, windows, and trees. A map of all the lit Christmas Lane houses can be acquired at a booth (accessory) which proclaims you can get your *Tour Tickets Here*.

There are three additional accessories in Snow Village starting with *Santa Comes To Town, 2009*. The latest piece in this annual series, this year we find the jolly old elf playing with a kitten, an obvious follow up to last year's scene with puppies. Another follow up is *Yuengling Delivery*, as beer arrives for last year's tavern of the same name. Finally, in *Help With The Decorations* a squirrel is actually helping himself to the edible treats recently placed on a tree by a young girl.

Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday, **DICKENS' VILLAGE!** And Department 56 found a unique way to celebrate – by recreating the famed Original Set of Seven among eight new buildings and nine accessories. The new series will actually include eight buildings with the addition of *The Neilan Lund Gallery*. Mr. Lund was the designer behind many Department 56 buildings, including the original seven. This celebration is tinged with sadness, though, as Mr. Lund recently passed away, but not before enjoying the celebration in his honor. The new building was designed by Barbara Lund, Neilan's daughter. The gallery features artwork by Mr. Lund in the windows. *Welcome To Lund's Art Show* is the related accessory. The father and daughter, clad in Victorian garb, welcome visitors to his gallery.

Both the gallery and the *Crowntree Inn*, the first of the re-releases, were initially presented to us last November. Like all of the “new” set of seven, the inn retains the original color scheme and is based on the original structural design, thus the red slate roof, gable on top, diamond windows on the second floor, and three large windows across the front. Each of the new series will have touches of silver to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and each one comes with a related accessory. In the case of the inn, it is the *Crowntree Coach* (right). It bears a resemblance to the Dover Coach (1987). This time a single horse pulls a black and red coach with both the driver and a trumpeter who announces the coach's arrival.

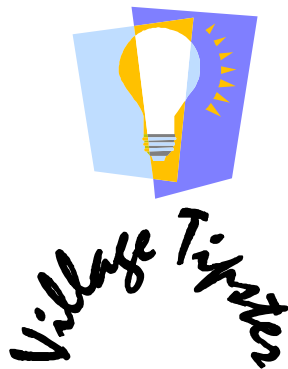


Two other pieces in the original series have been recreated. *Abel Beesley Butcher* maintains the original dark thatched roof, second story dormer window, and the main window trimmed with green shutters and adorned with garland. In a less than sanitary (by today's standards) fashion, several carcasses are suspended outside the front windows. The second story could be assumed to be the family residence. A grinding wheel is at the side of the building to hone the butcher's tools. *Golden Swan Baker* has several traits similar to the 1984 version. It is timber-framed with a brown tile roof, a third floor dormer, a large brick chimney, and main floor bay windows that feature miniature bakery goods. As with many buildings of the era, pictures are used to help direct those citizens who could not read. The first accessory in Dickens' Village was a set of carolers, so it should surprise no one that a new *Dickens' Carolers* has been created, including musicians as well as the singers. *Dickens' Shopkeepers*, [S/3], includes a butcher, baker, and innkeeper to place at their respective structures.

Charles Dickens wrote at times under the pen name “Boz” so that he could write lighter materials while maintaining his image as a serious author. The building *Boz's Books* pays tribute to that phase of his career. This is a three-story building featuring several lighted windows. It is uncertain how secret Dickens' alter ego was, as he is depicted in the accessory *A Dickens Book Signing*. *The Flying Horse Tavern* is the 18<sup>th</sup> pub or inn in this collection. A two-story cream building with green accents, it also possesses the signs that were famously hung from such eating establishments. Two of the gentlemen customers can be seen *Tipping A Pint* in the related accessory. Something new has come to this collection with *M. Pickering Finest Persian Rugs* and its related accessory *Persian Rugs For Sale*. It is rather nondescript building, belying the value of the merchandise inside. During the reign of Queen Victoria, London was a cultural and trading center, and this building reflects that status.

The primary subseries in Dickens' Village is A Christmas Carol. Characters from that story have recurred often throughout the years in this porcelain village. The latest addition is *Glensford School*, the school attended by a young Ebenezer Scrooge, and the place where he was transported by the Ghost of Christmas Past. This version includes several of the highlights mentioned in the story – a large red brick building, a golden bird on the bell tower, and half thawed water spouts. The accessory *Fan Visits Ebenezer* portrays the adult Scrooge accompanied by the spirit as they gaze upon the childish version of Ebenezer chatting with his sister Fan.

The final accessory is *Regent's Park Footbridge*, historically based in Camden Town, an area cited in many Dickens' works, including as the home area of the Cratchit family. This elegant footbridge might find its way into several village displays, not just Dickens' Village.



**OPEN HOUSE TIPS**  
**Stops 7 - 9**  
**2008 - 2009**

The final stops on our open house tour showed us that displays and collections come in lots of shapes and sizes. The Oatman, Brown, and Swildens couples opened our eyes to a variety of possibilities.

Up in Murrieta, Phyllis and Ed Oatman put their focus on North Pole. They used snowy mountainous backdrops to frame their display. We've all seen the Christmas trees with shelves for displaying, but the Oatmans uniquely placed theirs in the center of a longer display with the tree going below and above the base level to provide various elevations.



A number of long and short stairways were created by them so that their elves could move from level to level. Taking a page from the economic news, Phyllis had created signs, showing that hard times have even reached the North Pole.



Over in La Mesa, something new was happening at the Browns. Vern took responsibility for the terrific New England Village display while Michele was jumping right in to create her first charming North Pole display.

Vern's New England was peninsula-shaped giving all a chance to get up close. As always, Vern showed us his master talent, which we've come to admire, with groundcover, hillsides, and harbors. New this year, he had incorporated two waterfalls, using real water, into his display.



In the North Pole Village, Michele used an assortment of objects as fences and trees. Her fences included dominoes, bears, acrylic blocks, crayons, and tinsel draped on push pins.



Some of her trees were rock candy suckers, skewers with tinsel, and shiny, glittery floral picks.

A trip to Rancho Bernardo gave us a chance to see many lovely collections. Sharon Swildens is a collector of many things, and Husband John is her proud enabler. We were able to view display cases with Snow Village and North Pole, but that was just the beginning. The Swildens collect Hallmark ornaments, White House ornaments, and some Lladro just to name a few of the things that delighted us.



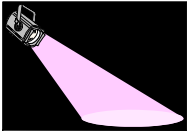
Sharon gave her guests a list of different themed trees to draw our attention to the array of ornaments in her collections.



Another great season of home tours... Thanks everyone!

This will be my last article until later in the year. Vern Brown volunteered to write while I'm traveling and, like Village ABCs, his writing project has grown. He has some great ideas that I'm sure you'll enjoy in the coming months.

*Winnie*



## Spotlight on...

This is a little segment I had run for a while several years ago. At the time most of the members who were not too shy shared with the rest of us what they collected and how long they had been addicted to D56. Quite a few new members have joined since the last time this column made its appearance and I think maybe it is time to introduce them in print. If you are a new member in the last four years or if you have never been spotlighted and feel now may be the time, please send to me the following information:



## *Getting to know you*



Your name, village(s) collected, how long have you been collecting, how long have you been a member of the SD56ers, favorite village, favorite piece, least favorite piece. While you are at it please answer the following: if price were no object I would like to (get, have, do, or see): displays you've done that please you the most: helpful hints or suggestions: interesting things about yourself or your collection(s): information you want (where to buy, how to make, etc): comments.

E-mail to [toolah@cox.net](mailto:toolah@cox.net) , or bring the information to the next meeting, March 18, 6:30pm.



## *Little Miss Sunshine*

March 2009

Louise Moody, who is doing well, and would like to thank everyone for the cards, calls and good wishes.

Dorothy Dees is in therapy and is taking it day by day.

Jim Murphy will be having surgery, on his back in a few months; the pain is continually getting worse.

Hopefully, Jon Sage who had a bout of pneumonia will be home from the hospital soon.

Dave Hansen of Canterbury Gardens broke his leg in a Motocross accident and required hospitalization and surgery. He is now home recovering from the ordeal. Cards should be sent to the store. Address is: Canterbury Gardens, 2402 S. Escondido Blvd. Escondido, CA 92025, Attn. Dave Hansen

# San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285  
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the **third** Wednesday of the month, March 18<sup>th</sup>

March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	<b>18</b>	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

At the Sharp Spectrum Center Court  
8695 Spectrum Center Court  
6:45 social, meeting at 7:15



Directions: From either I-805 or I-163 take the Clairemont Mesa exit and proceed east, turn right onto Kearny Villa Road, at Spectrum Center Blvd. turn left. Sharp Spectrum Center Court is the first right after the Marriott Courtyard. When entering the Sharp property the parking lot is through the gate to the right.

The **San Diego Fifty Sixers** are members of the National Council of 56 Clubs



SAN DIEGO FIFTY SIXERS		
Calendar of Events - 2009		
March	18	Club Meeting / <b>Third</b> Wednesday- 6:30pm / Bob O'Connor – H-O-U-S-E
April	22	Club Meeting /Fourth Wednesday- 6:30pm / Make and Take
May	20	Club Meeting / <b>Third</b> Wednesday- 6:30pm / Mid year releases and games
June	17	Club Meeting / <b>Third</b> Wednesday- 6:30pm / Canterbury Gardens
July	15	Club Meeting / <b>Third</b> Wednesday- 6:30pm / Games
August	26	Club Meeting /Fourth Wednesday- 6:30pm / Pot Luck & Power Point Presentation
September	23	Club Meeting /Fourth Wednesday- <b>7pm</b> / To be announced
October	28	Club Meeting /Fourth Wednesday- <b>7pm</b> / Annual Swap & Sell
November	18	Club Meeting / <b>Third</b> Wednesday- 6:30pm / Games
December		Open Houses All Month
Please check the Calendar regularly. These programs are subject to change.		
The board meets each month on the Wednesday before the regular club meeting. Any member is welcome to attend the board meeting. Meetings start at 5:30 pm at the Miramar Café, 7128 Miramar Road		

## Cookie Elves – March

Betty Roberts, Shirley Bechtel, Patricia Herriman, Karen Boynton