



# Village Views

“The voice of the San Diego Fifty-Sixers”  
Volume 16: Number 4 April 2009

## Congratulations Jim!

At the March Club meeting, members voted Jim Murphy as our very first **Cheryle O'Connor Memorial Collector of the Year**. Congratulations, Jim! It is well deserved. Jim will receive his award at the April meeting. By the way Jim, congratulations for being named member of the year for the San Diego 3-Railers too.



We are in for a real treat at this month's meeting. A couple of months ago, Chick Storey entertained us with his tree and mountain making talents. It was such a success we have asked him to return for another session. He agreed to come back and lead us in a Styrofoam-wall and tree **make and take**. If you happen to have a "hot knife", please bring it with you. I am looking forward to seeing everyone on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30.

Jon

**MINDLESS MUTTERING...**

...by Bob O'Connor

We had a large and deserving list of nominees for our club's collector of the year. The vote was taken by secret ballot so even the inquisitive newsletter editor was unable to find out the number of votes each person received. All I was told other than the obvious was that it was a close race. Near as I can tell we have a winner, Jim Murphy, and everyone else tied for runner-up. Congratulations to Jim. It is a well earned honor and I think we have a very strong representative for Department 56 national collector of the year.



We are finally getting back to our strong suit for club meetings. Chick Storey will be giving a workshop on creating block walls and deciduous trees. We have such a talented membership it sometimes seems we must know all there is to know about building displays. As a group we do have a plethora of knowledge but only by sharing the information will everyone benefit from the treasure trove of wisdom. If you have a hot knife bring it with you so you can learn hands on the techniques Chick will be demonstrating this month.

Who will be next to step up and share their special knowledge or talent with us? Remember you need not make an entire meeting program out of what you wish to share, just use what time you need to relay the information to us.

**Raffle Prizes**

**From Canterbury Gardens:**

Bennington Manor.....Jon Sage

**From Casual Living:**

\$50.00 Gift Certificate.....Winnie Sage

**From City Lights:**

New England Town Tree.....Esther Erdell  
Lit Tinsel Tree, White.....Lauren Murphy  
Roll of Moss.....Lauren Murphy

**From The Mole Hole:**

Scary Walk (Halloween) .....Chick Storey

**From the SD 56ers:**

Fiber Optic Woods.....Sharon Swildens

**From Unique Gifts:**

\$25.00 Gift Certificate.....Lauren Murphy

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

Set of Six Candles, Millie Warner; Fezziwig Warehouse, Bob Dees; Dept 56 Santa with House Ornament, Sue O'Connor; Small Snowman in Snowball, Karen Boynton; Chicken Candle Holder, Winnie Sage; Snowflake Hanger, Roxanne Hudson.

<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
<i>Village Views</i>	Bob O'Connor	760-789-3957

## Department 56 update

On March 6, 2009, the following article was published in the Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal:

Department 56 parent Lenox sold in bankruptcy auction.

Brown-Forman distributing \$205 million to shareholders A group led by New York investment firm Clarion Capital Partners has won the bankruptcy auction to acquire Eden Prairie-based Lenox Group Inc. Clarion, in a news release, valued the deal at about \$100 million inclusive of cash and assumption of certain liabilities of Lenox. The bankruptcy court approved the Clarion bid after bidding was reopened during a hearing last Wednesday. Only weeks before, KPS Capital Partners had won an auction for most of the company The Clarion purchase includes the Lenox, Dansk, Gorham and Department 56 brands. Peter Cameron, previously the CEO of Waterford Wedgwood and All-Clad Metalcrafters, will become Lenox's new CEO at the close of the deal, which is expected this month.

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## Little Miss Sunshine April 2009

Jon Sage gets stronger every day. He even went to the Model Train Museum for the first time in four weeks.

Winnie, Jon, Lauren and Jim are getting excited about their European cruise this month.

Jim Murphy scored a double last week when he was named the San Diego 3-Railers Member of the Year the night after winning Collector of the Year honors.

Michelle and Vern Brown have another granddaughter born 3/25/09

Patty Burdick attended another Scrapbook Royalty Charity crop March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. Together they raised \$26,000 for the Cancer Coping Center and the Boys and Girls Club.

Dorothy Dees celebrated a birthday March 28<sup>th</sup> and is getting stronger every day.

Marge Bramfeld is having her Electro Cardio Version on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Marge is still on oxygen and feeling better with the oxygen.

# Collectively Speaking

...BY BOB DALLOW

Four months after we began our expedition through each of the villages, looking for new pieces, the journey comes to an end. Join me as we check out North

Pole and Christmas in the City.



**NORTH POLE** introduced six new buildings and 11 accessories. We all know that Santa gets around a lot on Christmas Eve, but his upward bound mobility is a big surprise. In 1990 he and Mrs. Claus resided at the North Pole Workshop. Six years later they relocated to Route One, Home of Mr. and Mrs. Claus. They're "movin' on up" now to *The North Pole Palace* (left) which is built around the actual North Pole in the front yard. The sweeping roof line has red tile shingles; there are gingerbread detailing, snowflake finials, and tower turrets. *Gifts From Santa & Mrs. Claus* depicts the residents presenting presents to two elves.

Phase two of new digs for the reindeer is *The Reindeer Stables, Prancer & Vixen*. This is the second new stable, following last year's home for Dasher and Dancer. The newest condominium features timber framing and cracked stucco, and a similar color pallet to last year's barn. Corresponding accessories naturally are *Prancer* and *Vixen*. Flying reindeer are not the only diversions at the Pole. *Nollie and Ollie's Custom Snowboards* has updated the winter scene. The strange names of the proprietors are types of snowboard maneuvers. The Alpine styled building includes a ramp where an elf can be seen testing the boards. The related accessory, *The Snowboard Artist*, demonstrates the art of customizing.

Food is the theme at two of the new buildings. *The Lunch Box Café* is aptly named as the building is designed like the old metal ones we carried to grade school. In them were thermos bottles; guess what the building's chimney looks like. Right! The name over the door identifies the owner as Mel, and there's a red-beehive hairdo on the waitress in the accessory *You Want Fries With That?* Now that sounds familiar too, doesn't it? The second building is *Cocoa Chocolate Works*, a building that includes just about every type of chocolate imaginable in its construction. Not only can we not resist the allure of rich milk chocolate, but it's equally irresistible to the elves making the goodies. *Too Good To Resist* shows what happens when a hungry elf is given the responsibility of making chocolate Santas.

The final new building is *Tinker Bell's Lighthouse*, a rather strange looking building for the North Pole. The primary color is green, and the architecture is more spring fairy than snowy winter. The Peter Pan character appears with two young elves in *Dressing Up With Tink*.

There are four additional accessories, not related to specific buildings. Another new sport has come to the region in the form of *The North Pole Curling Team*. In addition to the competing elves, spectators include squirrels, a rabbit, and a deer. They're ice-fishing at the North Pole where two elves might be surprised to learn what they caught in *Hooked A Big One*. In one of their traditional tasks, we also see elves *Packing The Gifts*. The annual *Christmas Around The World* makes a stop in *China*. There is a slight contradiction in the title because the figures are not celebrating Christmas but the Chinese New Year.

**CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY** introduced four new buildings and five accessories this year. In 1990 Department 56 introduced Wong's in Chinatown, an attractive red restaurant. Most major cities have a Chinatown, and it seemed that Department 56 recognized that. Not really. It has taken nineteen years for them to extend this community beyond the original building. *The Golden Ox Market* (right) has Chinese influences such as bright colors, a hanging Chinese lantern, and pagoda overhangs. In the Chinese calendar, 2009 is the "year of the ox," thus the name of the market. An herbal medicine store is on the second floor of the three-story building. Not only has the number of buildings doubled, but the first accessories uniquely for Chinatown have been created. *Welcome to Chinatown* is a gate with two Foo Dog statues which are a symbol of protection, and are used to ward off evil spirits. A second related accessory, *Lanterns & Fireworks For Sale*, features a vendor hawking those items as well as flags and banners, all of which are used in Chinese holidays.



There is another "second" building in the City. Grand Central Railway Station (1996) is a replica of the famous New York City train station. Now we add *Union Station* which was inspired by the station of the same name in Denver, Colorado. This Limited Edition of 7,000 pieces includes an animated feature at the left front corner where a traveler and porter move luggage in and out of the building. This device has previously been utilized successfully by Department 56 pieces such as Snow Village's Kringle's Korner and North Pole's Rubber Duck Factory. The rotating piece requires a special adapter which is included. The nearly thirteen-inch building resembles government "architecture" designed in light-colored brick. A related accessory, *Read All About It*, depicts a newsboy trying to sell copies of the "Daily News," a hitherto unseen publication. What happened to the "City Globe," the only newspaper with printing presses in the City?



It may not be "correct" in today's times, but in the 1940s era our City is set in smoking was not a taboo topic. *Havana's Cigar Shop* (left) was the source of those stinky stogies my father brought into the house which led to my mother's frequent complaint that the smell never left the curtains. A traditional cigar store Indian stands outside the front door of the three-story building. The cigar store occupies the bottom level while the upper two stories are residential quarters. Mom certainly wouldn't want to have to deal with the curtains in those apartments! One of the traditional celebratory occasions where cigars were the offering followed a new offspring's birth. That scene is depicted in the accessory *I'm A Daddy, Have A Cigar*.

Last fall *21 Club* was an early release to Fortunoff's in New York. Now the famed New York restaurant with its glamorous clientele is part of the City collection. It was originally a speak-easy in the Prohibition era, and it has been portrayed in documentaries about the clever ways bootleggers evaded the law. The jockeys that line the railings have been donated by famous horse breeders and owners. The club is a four-story gray building with multiple holiday decorations. The celebrity status of the club's patrons is reflected in the accessory *It's A Wrap*. A movie cameraman focuses on a Hollywood-looking couple, perhaps a foreshadowing of the many movies and television shows that would one day be filmed in that locale.



## KITCHEN MAGIC

In case you may be wondering, this is not going to be a discussion about the latest Billy Mays' kitchen gadget. Nor is it an article containing recipes for the marvelous food we had at last years' open houses. This piece is the first in a series of articles that will give you some ideas of the many things you might find in a typical home that will help you construct, create, and enhance your village display. As the above title suggests, I will start in the kitchen.

Several years back, I had a **coffee/spice grinder** on my Christmas list. Of course, I received two of them. I have found that extra grinder has become an indispensable tool when it comes time to work on the village display. The spice grinder will provide you with a wealth of **ground cover** options. Whatever you decide to grind needs to be

thoroughly dry before grinding. By grinding up chopped parsley leaves, you will end up with a perfect grass-like ground cover. Grind cocoa mulch, and you'll have something that works great for dirt roads. Add fine ground coffee to the ground cocoa mulch and you have a good representation of soil to use as farm fields.

If you buy a real Christmas tree or wreath, collect the fallen needles and save them for grinding next year. The ground needles make a usable grass groundcover plus it fills the room with the smell of Christmas. Your guests will think you use real trees in your display. The aroma does not last for a long period of time so you may wish to 'refresh' the grass every now and again. By using rosemary, you will have a similar effect but the smell will put you in a garden instead of the forest.

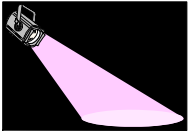
**Some things to remember when using a coffee/spice grinder to make groundcovers:** As stated before the item you wish to grind needs to be dry. There needs to be enough of the item in the grinding bowl to cover the grinding blades. If you don't have the grinding bowl reasonably filled, the grind will be very coarse and the texture inconsistent.

Also, your grinder needs to be used only for your village once you have ground up non-food items. Who knows, once you start using a grinder you may never buy over – the – counter groundcovers again.

Now, for something totally different. **Large wooden kitchen matches** can be used in many different ways to enhance the detail of your village. Of course, the first thing to do is remove the match head. Kitchen shears do the job quite easily. Next, depending upon what you plan to do with the matches, you could stain or paint them. Left natural, the color of the match sticks seems 'unnatural' when put in the village. If you decide to stain the wood (very strong instant coffee should dull the finish), do the staining before using any glue. The glue will block the stain from penetrating the wood.

**A few more ideas for using wooden matches:** Cut the match sticks into half inch lengths and stack them to look like firewood. Depending on the scale of train, you could again cut the match sticks the length of the railroad ties and stack them near the track.

Running out of room, more ideas next month. **VERN**



## Spotlight on... **Jim Murphy**

It seems only appropriate to reinstitute the spotlight column with someone who is in the spotlight already. I'm sure you are aware by now that Jim Murphy has won the Cheryle O'Connor Memorial Collector of the Year award. Jim's favorite village is Snow Village Halloween. He owns every piece (and several of many) Department 56 makes for Halloween along with quite a contingent of other manufacturer's Halloween pieces. His extensive Department 56 display is housed in the saloon (one of many out buildings on his four acre ranch) While the rest of the property is haunted by many life size characters and a plethora of inflatable creatures for the entertainment of his many guests. While all the screeching and moaning is part of the atmosphere of the Halloween season there is relief inside his home. Jim and his lovely bride Lauren also have a large and growing North Pole collection with of course several trains running around his village. When you attend the Murphy open houses (yes he has several each year) not only do you enjoy his animated show with his Halloween display you will also be treated with some of the finest culinary treats in the western style. These edibles range from pit bar-b-cue to chili cook offs with enough salads and desserts to please the most demanding palates. Of course Jim doesn't accomplish all this by himself; he has a huge support staff. First there is Lauren and ahh, umm, err, well there *is* Lauren. The old saying "behind every good man is a woman" couldn't be truer than in this case. Jim and Lauren live life to its fullest and to meet them is to become a friend for life. Sue and I are proud to be included in this group.

I suppose I can't close this spotlight without mentioning Jim's association with another club. He is very active in the Three Railers, a group of toy train enthusiasts that have a location in Balboa Park amidst all the museums. Besides the work he puts into his Department 56 displays, and the time he spends with all of us, he also makes time to help create the scenery for the large train exhibits. Take the time to visit with him at the Three Railers you can learn several things you can use in your displays as well as have a good time playing with his trains.

Who can I spotlight next? Who do you want to know a little more about? Do you want us to learn more about who you are? This source is only as good as the participation of the members. I could give you a list of the most interesting members, but Winnie already gave you a roster so go for it.

# San Diego Fifty-Sixers

PO Box 23285  
San Diego, CA 92193

Our next meeting will be on the  
fourth Wednesday of the month,  
April 22nd

April						
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	<b>22</b>	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

April	22	Club Meeting /Fourth Wednesday- 6:30pm / Make and Take / Chick Story
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 - April

**Michele Brown, Millie Warner, Karen Boynton, Winnie Sage**