

THE CATALINA ISLANDER

BRIEFS

P.L.A.Y. tykes trike against cancer

On April 14 and 15, Preschool Learning for Avalon Youth held a trikeathon for St. Jude's hospital. See story, page 2

Only on Catalina

Columnist Chuck Liddell makes some personal observations on what life is like on the "other side" of the ocean," also known as the mainland See story, page 3

On the Water

Just as the swallows seem to return to San Juan Capistrano each year, so to do the flying fish return to Catalina Island. But, it is never a certainty until someone actually sees them. On April 22, 2016, Capt. John King and a family group that chartered his boat saw two. See story, page 4

Paw Trails: Thar She Blows

Buckley discovers a wonderful new playmate: the winds of Catalina. See story, page 5

Consider the birds when trimming your trees

Spring is a traditional time for trimming trees on Catalina Island. But disturbing a bird's nest may cause the parents to abandon it and their young. It's also against federal and state law to needlessly destroy birds' nests. See story, page 6

Straight Up Builders and Virgie's Snack Bar both win softball games

Virgie's Snack Bar leads the co-ed softball league. Straight up Builders is second in the league. See story, page 6

Tournament helps city buy soccer equipment

Just for the Halibut Tournament, a non-profit fishing tournament, recently provided the money for new soccer equipment for the Avalon Recreation Department. See story, page 7

New Alanon meeting in Avalon

Catalina has a new Alanon meeting: Saturday 5-6 p.m. @Singing Waters Christian Center, 346 Catalina Ave.



Meet the Catalina Chimes Tower Foundation Board! Back row L to R: Alison Wrigley Rusack, Geoff Rusack, Charles Canby, Lourdes Thoricht, Randy Herrel, Blanny Avalon Hagenah and Gina Long. Seated in the front L to R: Jani Eisenhut and Catherine Stephens. Courtesy photo

Ring them Bells!

Chimes Tower is declared sound; now being restored

BY GINA LONG
FOR THE CATALINA ISLANDER

Structural engineer Tim Canby recently examined Avalon's iconic Chimes Tower, and declared it to be solidly in place and structurally sound. The newly-formed board of the Catalina Chimes Tower Foundation had feared the worst for this 1925 city treasure. They, like so many who pass by the chimes, could only see decaying wood, cracking plaster and sliding walls, and were

concerned that the building would have to be torn down and rebuilt. On a site visit, though, the engineer showed them that the main structure supporting and protecting the Deagan chimes is resting on a solid concrete pad, with no threat of collapse or sliding.

The 90 year old Tower has clearly experienced some deterioration, but most of it appears to be cosmetic, rather than structural. Now, having met several times, the Chimes Tower Foundation board has a better grasp on how to go about addressing one of its key goals-- restoring and beautifying this unique building.

In 2013 the board of the Santa Catalina Island Company began to

look at how best to care for the tower. Recognizing that it was not only cherished by many but, also, that individuals, corporations and more wanted to help with its care and restoration, they decided to create a non-profit foundation and deed the chimes to it. While the process took longer than was expected, in 2015 the Catalina Chimes Tower Foundation was formed, had its first meeting and took ownership of the building. Also, in 2015 the Foundation obtained its tax exempt status, and the Board hired local accountant, Christy Lins, to handle financial matters.

Since then, the CCTF has

Chimes, Page 11

Mysterious Island

Catalina's facts, folklore and fibs
This Week: THE CURSE OF THE 'JOYITA'

BY JIM WATSON

Editor's Note: : This is the third and final part in a series on tales of ghost ships. Jim Watson is the author of "Mysterious Island: Catalina," available on Amazon, Kindle and in stores in Avalon.



In the early morning hours of Oct. 3, 1955, a poor excuse of a vessel known as the M.V. Joyita made her way to sea through the pristine waters of Apia harbor

in Western Samoa. The name "Joyita" translates from Spanish into "little jewel." But at this stage in her career, the Joyita was anything but.

From forepeak to rudderpost she was stained the ugly brown hue of corrosion that can come only from the sea's palette of ruin.

Tears of rust wept from every rivet and drained from every scupper.

On top of the need for a good scraping and a bright new

Watson, Page 11

Avalon narrows search for manager

Finalists to be interviewed
Thursday, May 12

BY CHARLES M. KELLY

Last week, Avalon officials narrowed its search for a new city manager to seven candidates, according to Councilman Oley Olsen.

He said that 52 applicants were cut down to 14 applicants and then cut down again to seven. Mayor Anni Marshall called the culling process a "preliminary review," but would only say on the record that there were less than 10 finalists. Marshall said if everything goes according to plan, the council will interview the finalists on Thursday, May 12. According to Olsen, if one candidate stands out, the council could go directly to making a decision. If the council gets down to two candidates, they would be brought over on separate days.

Denise Radde is currently serving as interim city manager. She and Ben Harvey were the two finalists when Avalon last sought a city manager.

The council fired Harvey in November by a vote of 3-2. The reason for the firing was not disclosed. Recently, Harvey was hired as interim city manager of Pacific Grove. He will make about \$160,000 a year.

"He got a better package (there) than he got here," Olsen said.

"Congratulations," said Marshall, who voted to fire Harvey. "That should be awesome for him."



The M.V. Joyita mysteriously disappeared in the South Pacific in 1955, only to be discovered without her crew and passengers two months later. Photo courtesy Wikipedia Commons



Watson

From page 1
coat of paint, the Joyita was due for a thorough mechanical overhaul, fore and aft.

As unsightly as her hull might have been, stretched tightly over her ancient ribs, it at least performed the dubious office of concealing the sea-going swap meet of corroded machinery contained within her engine room.

The Joyita's skipper, Dusty Miller, was desperate to get his South Seas enterprise out of debt with creditors and was engaged in an ill-advised supply run to the Tokelau island group about 270 miles away.

She was running late due to a faulty engine clutch, yet another glitch in a long string of problems that had plagued the vessel since her days as a luxury yacht in the waters around Catalina.

Aboard the Joyita were 16 crew members and nine passengers, including a surgeon on his way to perform an amputation, a copra buyer and two children.

But as she made her way into the open sea, the Joyita wasn't alone.

Legend says that islanders gathered on shore and watched in astonishment and horror as a huge, dark and brooding phantom ship described as "an ancient galleon from the time of Columbus" stalked her.

This menacing vessel was "enormously high aft" and unlike any ship anyone had seen in these waters.

Witnesses tell that she traveled without lights nor sound and that she moved with incredible speed.

Apparently oblivious to this specter from the deep, the crew and passengers of the Joyita sailed on.

It was the last time the world would ever see them.



Jim Watson
Columnist

THE LEGEND IS BORN

The story of the M.V. Joyita begins across the channel from Avalon in 1931 when she was launched from the ways at the Wilmington Boat Works. The 69-foot motor yacht was built for Hollywood movie director Roland West, who named the ship for his wife at the time, Hollywood starlet Jewel Carmen.

Bad mojo plagued the Joyita from before she was even launched. According to legend, a Portuguese ship worker fell to his death from the rigging while the vessel was still under construction.

His widow, who reportedly dabbled in the occult, put a curse on the ship and the Joyita's villainous reputation was off and running.

The fact that the ship suffered a disastrous engine room fire on her maiden voyage to Catalina only added to her infamy. Director West's forte was film noir and it would seem he colored his real life with the same genre. In 1930, while still married to Carmen, he fell in love with

Hollywood starlet Thelma Todd during a yachting excursion to Catalina.

The affair lasted for several years—much to the chagrin of Jewel—until the sorrowful day that Thelma Todd was found dead in a neighbor's house, the victim of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carmen, of course, was immediately suspected of snuffing out her competition. But after extensive inquiry on the part of the LAPD, Todd's death was ultimately ruled "accidental with suicidal tendencies."

West, too, was considered a suspect due to the deterioration of his relationship with Todd in their final years. For the rest of their lives, both Carmen and West were dogged by conspiracy theories tying them to the death.

In 1936, West apparently

wised up and sold the Joyita to a charter outfit that catered to the Hollywood elite. But the ship's troubles continued and when a passenger mysteriously vanished one night no one wanted to sail on her anymore. The U.S. Navy took possession of the ship during World War II, but put her into dry dock after the vessel suffered one too many groundings.

Even though she was safely ashore and in the custody of the United States Navy, the Joyita continued her mischief: a caretaker died from battery acid fumes, a series of mysterious fires occurred and two men were killed in a fight on board.

After being sold for war surplus, the Joyita went from owner to owner until finding herself deep in the South Pacific, tramping her way from atoll to atoll.

EPILOGUE

Nearly two months after her mysterious disappearance after leaving Apia, an alert deckhand on the merchant ship Tuvalu spotted the Joyita listing and bobbing in the ocean. Upon boarding, the crew of the Tuvalu found not a soul aboard. The logbook was missing and radio gear lay smashed about the decks. The ship's hull was sound and there was still plenty of fuel in her tanks. The surgeon's medical kit contained four lengths of blood-stained bandages.

No messages were found, save the letters "WNQV" spelled out in signal flags—the significance of which remains a mystery to this day. Incredibly, the old gal still had some life in her and was resurrected for a short time, once again tramping the South Seas.

But mechanical problems and ownership disputes plagued her and she unceremoniously ended her career by running aground.

There, she was stripped and left to the ravages of the sea. As for Captain Miller and his crew and passengers, they are slumbering somewhere in the deep.

Chimes

From page 1

received many gifts from local residents as well as visitors from over town. In addition, two mainland-based law firms and an architect are donating their services, and the Avalon Rotary and Lions Clubs have offered to help with the physical cleanup of the site.

At its recent annual meeting, the Foundation named officers and appointed two new board members, Jani Eisenhut and Gina Long. According to Board Chair Alison Wrigley Rusack, "Jani and Gina embody the spirit of the community and bring expertise, a wealth of his-

tory and energy to the table! We are very fortunate to have them by our side as we embark on restoring and maintaining the beloved Chimes Tower for future generations to enjoy." Rusack also said that she and her fellow board members are thrilled that, "without our even having put together the Foundation's marketing/development plans, so many have opened their wallets and offered their time to this project," adding, "I just want to say thanks to all of you who have helped get our organization off the ground!"

Going forward, Rusack stated that the Foundation's board is working on cleanup plans, timelines, goals, landscaping, security, a web

page, cost estimating, insurance, donor recognition and more. She said that she and her fellow board members can hardly wait to get the renovations started, but they want to ensure that they do it the right way.

Tax deductible contributions may be sent to the Catalina Chimes Tower Foundation at P.O. Box 677, Avalon, CA 90704. For questions and comments please e-mail info@catalinachimes.org. The Catalina Chimes Tower Foundation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. The Foundation's mission is to restore and maintain the Chimes Tower, an Avalon historic landmark on Catalina Island, for the community and future generations to enjoy.



CATALINA FLYER

NEWPORT BEACH TO CATALINA

800-830-7744 Catalinainfo.com

Departs Balboa Pavilion 9am / Return from Avalon departs 4:30pm

Stay and Play Packages
Save money and have a great time.
Please see our web site for
a list of our partner hotels and tours.






LUAU LARRYS

JUST A FEW DOORS FROM THE PIER
ON CRESCENT AVENUE

LIVE MUSIC
Friday and Saturday Nights

**CHEESEBURGER
IN PARADISE**
Wednesdays 5-8pm
DINE-IN ONLY | NO TO GO ORDERS

JEWELS of INTEREST



**NOW IN
THE ATWATER
PASSAGEWAY**

(aka: Post Office Arcade)

Formerly in El Encanto



Home insurance from someone proud to call Avalon home.

As a local Allstate Agent, I know firsthand all of the good that happens in our community. And I'm here to protect all that's good in your lives.

With a variety of home insurance options, I can help you get the coverage that's right for you. Plus, get personal service, local insurance advice and much more.

Let me help you let the Good Life in!
(661) 378-2454



Allstate
You're in good hands.



CA License #0H06802
SHANNONHILL1@ALLSTATE.COM

♥♥ Doing business without advertising
is like winking at a girl in the dark.
You know what you are doing,
but nobody else does. ♥♥

— Stewart H. Britt