WELCOME TO A NEW YEAR!

A new year always brings thoughts of future plans. The Portuguese Historical Museum’s featured exhibit for 2019 will be the 100th anniversary of the completion of the wonderful building that is the Five Wounds Portuguese National Church in San Jose.

The project continues as we digitize all the museum’s previous exhibits. The band exhibit now shows all 14 California bands. The Hawaiian Connection, our most-popular-ever exhibit is also done. The Power of the Spirit installation, about predominantly-Portuguese churches in California, is almost complete as is the exhibit about the 1957-58 Capelinhos volcanic eruption and the subsequent departure of one third of the Azorean population.

A grant from the Rev. Thomas R. Bettencourt Foundation, administered by the Silicon Valley Foundation, will help us complete the digitization project. The Portuguese Heritage Society thanks Robert Bettencourt for his support over many years.

Check out our website: www.portuguesemuseum.org to see our progress.

-Joe Machado

A BUSY MUSEUM

The Portuguese Historical Museum is a popular site at History Park. In 2018 there were more than 7,100 visitors on weekend afternoons, at Dia de Portugal, and on weekdays for children on school field trips. That’s a lot of people learning about things Portuguese!

SAVE THE DATE:

Dia De Portugal, June 8, 2019
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
History Park, Kelley Park, San Jose

Have fun helping out for two hours
(serving food in a food booth, answering questions at the info booth, selling drink tickets, handing out programs at the entry gate).
Benefits: free parking, free food, feeling good at helping out, and meeting new people.
Sign up by calling (408) 612-8095 or e-mailing sweetcaroline87@comcast.net or writing to PO Box 18277, San Jose, CA 95158.

THANK YOU!
WE REMEMBER JOE ROSE

The California Portuguese community lost the beloved Joe A. Rose of San Jose on January 21, 2019. Noted for his kind and generous personality as well as great woodworking skill, he was born in Calheta on São Jorge Island in the Azores and came to America at age 14 with his family. He graduated from San Jose High School and right away started working with wood, first at a lumber company and then a cabinetmaker. Much later he started his own business. He served in the U.S. National Guard before returning to the Azores to marry his sweetheart, Maria Fatima Silva. The young couple settled in San Jose where they raised their five children.

Joe did the beautiful cabinet work you see as you enter the Portuguese Historical Museum. He was on the Museum’s board of directors and loyalty gave an afternoon each month to be a museum guide. He also volunteered at Five Wounds Church and School over many years. Whenever there was a community need, he and his wife were there to help.

The Roses’ first son, Julio, became a licensed architect and designed the Portuguese Museum before his untimely death in 1994. Joe is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter, and four grandchildren. We will all miss Joe, a man of great integrity, kindness, and talent. Rest in peace.

NEW GAME FEATURES PORTUGUESE

The hottest new board game of 2018 is called AZUL and is all about Portuguese tiles and putting them in place. The box explains:

AZUL invites you, a tile laying artist, to embellish the walls of the Royal Palace of Evora. Introduced by the Moors, “azulejos” (originally white and blue ceramic tiles) were fully embraced by the Portuguese when their king Manuel I, on a visit to the Alhambra palace in southern Spain, was mesmerized by the stunning beauty of the Moorish decorative tiles. The king, awestruck by the interior beauty of the Alhambra, immediately ordered that his own palace in Portugal be decorated with similar wall tiles.

Tiles are symbolic of Portuguese architecture. They are on floors, walls inside and outside, and even on ceilings. A highlight of a tourist’s trip to continental Portugal is a visit to the beautiful Palacio Nacional de Sintra, less than an hour south of Lisbon. The Museu Nacional de Azulejos in Lisbon’s Convento de Madre de Deus shows tiles from over five centuries. Decorative tiles are an excellent souvenir from a vacation in Portugal.

The game’s name AZUL means blue in both Portuguese and Spanish. Azulejo means tile in both languages (though the j is pronounced differently) and comes from the Arabic word az-zulayj meaning “polished stone.” Early tiles were frequently blue and white (and many still are).

The game’s instructions are a little difficult to understand but become clearer as the two-to-four players proceed. It’s not a game for young children (complicated score keeping), and the creators think a game will take 30 to 40 minutes. It is from a company located in both Canada and Germany, and the game pieces are colorful and seem sturdy.

It’s great to have Portugal featured anywhere and even more so when it’s a successful game marketed widely. But please note that King Manuel’s palace, as referred to on the game’s box, was in Sintra, not in Evora!
BICYCLIST OF MANY SKILLS

Did you know that bicycling was a very popular sport in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s? People not only rode bikes to go places and tour, they also raced. There were velodromes (tracks for bicycle racing) and competitions for local and even national championships. San Jose (then a much, much smaller place) was noted for its winning teams.

Among the excellent cyclists was a Portuguese-American with a surprising story. When Melvin Silvera was a child he was in a really bad car accident that resulted in the loss of his left arm below the elbow. But that didn’t stop him from bicycling. He devised special handlebars to accommodate his stump arm and he was really fast. He almost made it to the Olympics.

When as a very young man he applied for a job picking pears, the orchardist said he couldn’t possibly do the work with only one hand. Melvin said he’d compete with the farmer’s best picker and if he lost he’d work the whole season for nothing. Melvin won the contest and got the job.

Linda Silveria, a San Jose attorney who is an annual sponsor of Dia de Portugal, told us the story of her uncle Melvin and aunts Cecilia and Isabel, also bicyclists. plus a bit of family lore. There were quite a few Silveira families, and the mailman was always confusing them. To get their right mail they decided to change some spelling. So they became Silveira, Silvera, and Silveria and the mailman’s job improved. (Many families have “Americanized” their names or simply spelled them differently from the original Portuguese.)

Melvin was brilliant at mechanical things; he invented a type of gun, built his own car, and made jewelry. He had a hobby of growing orchids in two hot houses; his friends and family enjoyed his beautiful orchids for years and years. He worked at FMC, then later as a truck driver and still later at training race horses. He said that in his dreams he always had both hands. After an extraordinary life he died at age 60 in 1980.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

One of the most commonly found surnames for Portuguese Americans is Silveira.

When so many Flemish (Dutch) settlers went to live in the Azores in the 1400’s, some of their last names remained in the original Flemish such as Brum and Bras. Because the guttural Dutch sound was difficult to pronounce, the name VanHuerta became d’Huerta, then d’Utra and finally Dutra. Still other names were simply translated into Portuguese. Van der Hagen means shrub or bush and became Silveira. Because Americans are not accustomed to the ei sounding like long a as in ace or play, some people dropped the letter, leading to Silvera. Others just moved the letter i to where it looked right—thus Silveria. Our mailing list has 53 Silveiras, Silveras, and Silverias. We guess that very few translated the name to Bush.
MUSEUM FRIENDS PROVIDE VITAL FUNDS

Each year we say a huge “Thank you” to the generous supporters of the Portuguese Historical Museum. The Friends’ donations pay for building improvements and maintenance, new exhibits, and even the newsletter that you read three times a year. You may use the enclosed envelope to become or continue as a Friend of the Portuguese Historical Museum. MANY, MANY THANKS!

SEE AZOREAN CARNIVAL CELEBRATIONS

Most people have heard of the annual celebrations that precede Lent (the period of fasting and meditation before Easter). Brazil’s festivities are known worldwide: huge parades of costumed dancers dressed for the tropical warmth (summer in Brazil). In continental Portugal the costumes reflect the winter weather, but the atmosphere is similarly joyous. Carnival in Madeira has become a major attraction with costumes like those in Brazil and with big parades.

The Azores Islands, ancestral land of most Portuguese-Americans, have their own style, celebrated mostly on the island of Terceira. Performers wear elaborate costumes for the “dances,” which are part music and dance, part skit, and part acrobatics. The skits are often meant to poke fun at politics or social conditions. Of course, they are in Portuguese, but non-Portuguese speakers can get the general idea of the drama even if not the slang or subtle word meanings. The acrobatic aspect is the fancy footwork and arm work of the dances with swords or tambourines.

In past years there were weekend performances over several weeks before Lent. This year all shows are on one weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, March 1, 2, 3, and 4 with 16 different performing groups going to the following locations:

Portuguese Band of San Jose, 100 N. 27th St., San Jose—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
S. F. Nova Aliança, 37 N. 27th St., San Jose—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Nossa Senhora de Assunção, 2602 S. Walnut Rd., Turlock—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Modesto M.P.A.A., 432 Sixth St., Modesto—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Tulare Angrense, 1521 E. Bardsley Ave., Tulare—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Tulare T.D.E.S., 515 N. I St., Tulare—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Saint John’s Hall, 8301 8 ½ Ave., Hanford—Friday, March 1 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m.
Artesia D.E.S. Hall, 11903 Ashworth St., Artesia—Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m. and Monday, March 4 at 6 p.m.
Chino Valley D.E.S. Hall, 5216 Riverside Dr., Chino—Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m. and Monday, March 4 at 6 p.m.

If you attend both performances in a single location, you’ll see all the dance groups. And your big surprise is that all the shows are FREE and open to everyone. Have fun!

Thank you, David Silveira Garcia, for this information.

PAULINE CORREIA STONEHILL, STORYTELLER

Pauline Correia Stonehill told stories of her family ancestors in the Azores Islands, of those who came here first to Massachusetts and then to California, and of her own young years in the San Joaquin Valley. Her book A Barrelful of Memories was first published in 1996 and then issued again by Portuguese Heritage Publications of California (PHPC).

Pauline Stonehill died on January 5, 2019 at age 97. She had gone from a dairy farm childhood to the University of California at Berkeley where she graduated with great honors in English, French, and Art. She went on to teaching and enjoyed being an artist as well as a writer. She also sang in a chorus and played in a recorder ensemble during the 60 years she lived in San Jose.

Her stories of life include a very important section on California’s dairy industry during the late 1930’s and early 1940’s when State inspectors were testing for bovine tuberculosis. There were questions on the fairness of the tests with resulting legal proceedings. Her father argued in favor of the farmers, most of whom were Portuguese-Americans.

The barrel in the book’s title refers to her grandfather’s departure from Faial: hidden inside a barrel loaded into the ship. A Barrelful of Memories is an engaging book; find it at your local library or look for it on Amazon. PHPC has sold out.