Landmarks

Living History ~ The Tradition Begins With You



Yacht Clubs & Boating
Opening Day on the Bay
Gandy Dancers & Railroad Songs

Belvedere's Architect: Albert Farr
Planning & Replanning Intimate Weddings
Become A Member of The Landmarks Society

President's Corner

↑ year ago, Landmarks had to close its sites **1** to visitors and suspend all events. We had to develop a new approach to operations and maintaining our historic sites. With the added support of our generous donors, especially with the challenge grant, Landmarks made it through 2020. We were able to make critical repairs to Old St. Hilary's porch and the roof of the Railroad & Ferry Depot Museum.

As always, the new year brings new maintenance challenges. We are going through approvals to repair the China Cabin pilings, a process that involves several local, regional, and federal agencies and has already consumed almost a year. Our plan is to have the repairs completed by the end of 2021. The tides in the Bay constantly wear on the wood pilings so getting this done is a top priority.

Although our rains have been intermittent, the roof on the cottage at the Art & Garden Center has been leaking. We've placed pans to catch the water but that project has gone up the priority list. If you have had recent experience replacing your roof, you're familiar with the investment that entails.

Our office staff, Jennifer Hartung, Cathy Larson, and our Executive Director Patty Flax, are still providing coverage throughout the week with one person at a time present. We have limited office hours each day from about 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Our archives are open on the usual schedule of Tuesday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

Landmarks Society 2021 Board Officers

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Editors/Writers: Phil Cassou, Susan Cluff, Patty Flax and David Gotz Design: Mark Shepard, shepgraphics.com

Except where noted, all photos from the Landmarks Archives

Landmark's latest book, Growing Up Belvedere-Tiburon, by Paige Peterson and Dave Gotz has been very popular in both hardcover and paperback. We are now in the second printing.

Looking to the future, Landmarks is beginning to see interest in weddings and other events toward the Fall season and into 2022. The opening of outdoor venues at this time is a good sign that our historic sites may receive permission to open indoors in the next few months.

As we prepare for opening, we would welcome more volunteers. We also encourage high school and college students to volunteer and learn about their community. Their time with Landmarks can be used to satisfy community service requirements of many schools.

In our sixty-second year, Landmarks invites you to help continue our mission and join us in supporting, volunteering and participating in local history.

Phil Carry

Director's Message



huge thank you to all our loyal members and Adonors. Without you, we would not have survived this last year. Because of your ongoing generosity and support, we were able continue our important work of preserving our community's unique and rich history-past, present and futurefor generations to come.

Last year was one of constant change and re-adjustment to circumstances with almost no income from the rental of our historic

History is merely a list of surprises. It can only prepare us to be surprised yet again.99 Kurt Vonnegut

venues and few visitors to our sites. We sorely missed the joyous events we host-the concerts at Old St. Hilary's, plein air painting at the Art & Garden Center, weddings and celebrations of life at China Cabin and third graders and visitors at the Railroad & Ferry Depot Museum.

While we are eager to open our sites to the public, we want to ensure the safest environment possible for our volunteer docents, our visitors and our community and will not reopen until the Spring/Summer 2021. We will continue to keep you updated about our plans. We miss you and we are looking forward to welcoming you back in the months ahead.

With gratitude,

Patty Flax

History Carries On and Our Work Never Stops!

Please help our dedicated team ensure that our historic Landmarks sites and our community history are preserved for future generations.

To donate, go to www.landmarks.com





In November, these civic-minded young men from Tiburon's Boy Scout Troop 48 volunteered at the Art & Garden Center, helping to fill a dumpster with clippings and brush.

China Cabin Docent

Old St. Hilary's Docent

These wood pilings supporting the China Cabin have taken a beating since they were installed in 1979 and must be regularly reinforced and protected from marine borers like gribbles and shipworms.



Consider Volunteering



Office Support
Community Outreach
& Marketing
Website Volunteer

Call Cathy Larson, Community Outreach Manager at 415-435-1853.



YACHT CLUBS & BOATING

By Susan Cluff & Dave Gotz

Opening Day on the Bay

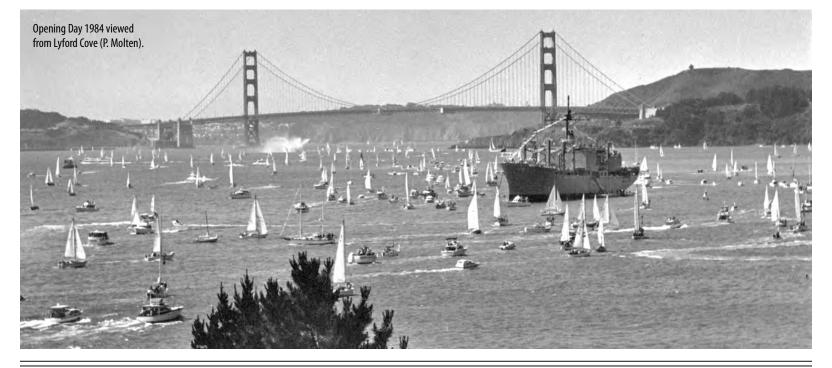
The last Sunday in April kicks off the official start of boating season with hundreds of pleasure and working boats of all shapes and sizes getting out on the Bay. Festivities start off with a blessing of the fleet in Raccoon Straits off Angel Island, continue with a decorated boat contest and boat parade at noon, then yacht club races and pleasure cruises in the afternoon. On land, the mood is festive, with thousands of spectators sporting nautical attire, hosting parties or toting picnic baskets.

The tradition started in the 1890s in Tiburon when floating arks and pleasure boats from the Corinthian Yacht Club lined up to parade out through the passage from the lagoon where they'd spent the winter. The first official boat parade was in 1917 when a new larger drawbridge was built in Belvedere and the Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association organized a parade along the waterfront of 60 yachts and 20 powerboats from different yacht clubs.

With the U.S. entering the First World War and fuel rationed, the next Opening Day was not until 1920. Even in the Depression, the annual event still featured almost 400 sail and motorboats. During World War II, yachting on the Bay was curtailed, and Opening Day was again cancelled. Then in 1947, hundreds of sailing yachts, skiffs, sailboats, tugs,



Opening Day circa 1903, a crowd gathers at the Belvedere drawbridge between Beach Road and Corinthian Island to see the large and small boats come out of the sheltered lagoon.



trawlers, wooden boats, sloops and cruisers all came out again to glide by reviewing stands on shore and practice their slightly rusty navigation skills.

In 1963, the Corinthian Yacht Club added the annual Blessing of the Pleasure Boats, modeled on age-old traditional blessings of vessels of working fishermen. In 1966, the Navy and Coast Guard joined in the celebration, providing destroyers and frigates for the popular and growing event. In the late 1980s, an estimated 4,000 yachts, kayaks and sailboats from around the Bay were part of the parade. It's one day on the Bay no sailor (or spectator) should miss.

Right: The flotilla heads toward Raccoon Straits to be blessed from the deck of the frigate *USS Lang* in 1988. (D. Smith)





The *USS Lang* became famous after the Loma Prieta earthquake when she helped re-establish electrical service to San Francisco. (D. Smith)



Spectators fill the deck at Sam's Anchor Café for Opening Day 1987. (D. Smith).

YACHT CLUBS & BOATING

San Francisco Yacht Club in Belvedere?

With two historic yacht clubs here in Belvedere, the question often comes up — which one is older? While the Corinthian Yacht Club on Tiburon Cove arrived here first in 1886, the San Francisco Yacht Club (SFYC) was created one cool foggy night by a group of whisker-wearing gentleman over brandy and cigars in 1868.

A name was selected, a clubhouse found near Mission Bay and bylaws and racing rules set based on those of the New York Yacht Club. On October 16, 1899, SFYC held its first regatta with seven sloops and schooners followed by a clambake. It was all great fun with just one problem, money. When costs exceeded fees, the Club moved to

temporary quarters at the Front Street wharf near Telegraph Hill.

In 1873, SFYC reorganized, arranging races, setting up cruises and holding sailing lectures; annual dues in 1877 were \$15. Now with 54 members, the Club built a new clubhouse across the Bay in Sausalito where the Trident restaurant is now, not far from the San Francisco Ferry landing and held competitions with new rival yacht clubs like the Corinthian Yacht Club.

By the mid-1920s, the large steamer ferries running between Sausalito and San Francisco created big rolling waves and wakes for the entire fleet. After a crescendo of complaints, the Club decided to purchase the derelict Belvedere Hotel property on Beach Road including tide lots on Belvedere Cove. SFYC relocated to Belvedere and

used the nearby Pacific Motor Boat Club until the new clubhouse was built in 1934. Plans to rebuild the yacht harbor then waited until after World War II.

In 1956, the Club dredged Belvedere Cove making a tidy, weather-tight harbor with 175 berths. By 1960, SFYC had 700 members on the roster, enough to increase the size of clubhouse ballroom, trophy rooms and wine cellar. The clubhouse was extensively remodeled in 2007 and in 2019, the old Cove House next door was razed and replaced with a new event hall and parking.

Now, as then, it's a place to get on the water and talk about new sailing techniques and equipment, the finer points of racing and navigation, and the Bay's ever- changeable weather, wind and tides.







The Allen family, long-time members of the SFYC, out enjoying the Bay on the *Mary Beth*. Harry at the helm and Winnie at the stern. David Allen, who would become a champion yacht racer, is watching the compass carefully on the left.



SFYC sailing class viewed from the deck of the China Cabin, July 2017 (D. Gotz)

YACHT CLUBS & BOATING

Corinthian Yacht Club's Colorful History

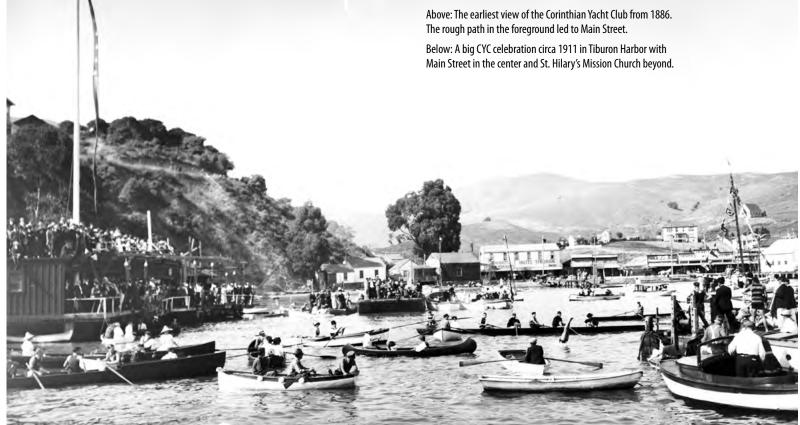
n March 16, 1886, a group of former members of the San Francisco Yacht Club, small boat sailors who felt that the interests of the "Mosquito Fleet" were being ignored, met to form a new yacht club. The Corinthian Yacht Club's name and constitution were adopted and officers elected with an initiation fee of \$5 and annual dues of \$10. In May, the Club's first cruise was organized to Martinez and the first regatta held.

The Club then leased the vacant one-acre tip of "Valentine's Island" for a yacht club and harbor

for \$12 a year with members building a simple wooden clubhouse at a cost of \$1,500. Almost immediately it proved too small and in 1890, members blew up the large rock under the clubhouse to make way for the now-famed "Pneumonia Alley" with its underground sleeping rooms, private saloons and member lockers.

According to covenants affixed to the land lease, the





"sale of liquors, cigars or refreshments" was strictly forbidden. Fortunately, the covenants said nothing about consumption. With membership now over 220, a "Night With the Corinthians" fundraiser was held in February 1900 with proceeds "to benefit enlarging the clubhouse." In August 1908 the club purchased the one-acre property from the Corinthian Island Company (successor to Valentine) for \$4,000, preventing the site from being turned into a hotel. The current Edwardianstyle clubhouse was built in 1912 at a cost of \$25,000.

In the 1950s, discussions began about rebuilding the club piers and creating an enclosed harbor. To fund it, the Club agreed to a 40-year lease of owned tidelands to a private corporation called the Corinthian Harbor Company, selling stock in the company in exchange for berthing rights. Tidelands were swapped with Sam Vella of Sam's Anchor Café who traded the tide lot his house sat on for one that fronted his café on Main Street. The small cove was then filled in to create a parking area.

In 1960, the ribbon was cut for a new 84-berth harbor and parking lot. In 1963, the Club completed a major remodel of the clubhouse and began the annual Blessing of the Pleasure Craft on Opening Day. In 1985, a program started with women teaching women to sail and in 1986 the Club celebrated its 100th anniversary and hosted its first international regatta. A few years later, CYC made major repairs to the clubhouse's underpinnings, footings and foundations and after a major storm in 1995, borrowed \$1.65 million to construct a new harbor breakwater and other improvements.

With the Club's mission of encouraging the love of boating, including the art of handling vessels and science of navigation, CYC sponsors approximately 50 days of racing a year and monthly cruise outs throughout San Francisco Bay and the Delta. CYC also holds the Wooden Boat Show for Master Mariners each year in July.



CYC winter regatta gets underway near Elephant Rock in January 2000. (D. Smith)



A modern view of Tiburon Harbor with the Corinthian Yacht Clubhouse in October 2018. (D. Gotz)

Gandy Dancers & Railroad Songs

by Susan Cluff

rom 1884-1942, Tiburon was a railroad town, employing hundreds of men who worked on the railroad, ferries and in machine shops owned by the Donahue Line, later the Northwestern Pacific Railway (NPR). The job of building and maintaining the railroad's hundreds of miles of track fell to section workers, crews of laborers who laid new rail, placed wooden cross bars, hammered spikes, tampered down gravel, built up sunken rail beds and repaired long trestles damaged by the weight of heavy train engines, freight and passenger cars crossing over the tracks.

Each section boss had to keep their crews working in sync so the custom was to sing songs with strong rhythms, leading the railroad section crews to be called "gandy dancers." Their songs or chants would have a specific tune and beat and at certain points, the workers would all lift together, allowing a few men to exert enough force to move heavy sections of rails or track.

Some think the name may have come from a tool made by the Gandy Tool Company of Chicago that looked like a long spoon that you wedged it under the railroad tie, then walked out the length of the tool, and jumped up and down to push the tie up so ballast of earth and rock could be shoveled under it to level it. Workers would also use picks, shovels, ballast forks and lining bars.

Others think it may have came from the Gaelic word "gandy" meaning someone who wore gloves, and "dancer" because of the repetitive motions the men made during the long hours of continuously driving spikes into wooden ties or other routine jobs that kept the railroads running. Or maybe it came from the odd gait of the tracklayers who'd walk in straight lines as they carried the rails like a gaggle of ganders (male geese), moving in unison to calls of "up and down."

Railroad workers were usually low-paid immigrants who brought their own songs and traditions to the job. Tiburon founder Peter Donahue hired mostly Irish and Italian laborers, paying them \$2 week in 1890. Laying and mending track meant working long days in harsh working conditions. With frequent derailments, landslides and washouts that would slow down train schedules, section crews would often exceed 12 hours of work until the tracks and trestles could be repaired. By the 1920s, much of the track repair work was done by machines.

Right: Some of the

many tools used by

the Railroad & Ferry

gandy dancers at

Depot Museum.

(D. Gotz)



Northwestern Pacific Railroad route map, 1913. High quality reproductions of this map are available from Landmarks for \$35-\$150 (depending on size).

Some of the old railroad songs are still sung today:

Patsy ory ory aye, Patsy ory ory aye, Patsy ory ory aye, A-workin' on the railroad. (Lift)

Standin' on the platform, Waiting for the train, Get your old blue bonnet, And let's go, Liza Jane. (Up)





Gandy dancers work in unison using lining bars to align the tracks in 1943. (J. Delano)

Belvedere's Architect: Albert Farr (1871-1947)

By Susan Cluff

ost people know the Belvedere Land Company building on Beach Road that looks a like a English country inn with its wood shingles, gabled roof and small oriel paned windows. Built in 1905 and designed by architect Albert Farr, it was the first commercial building in Belvedere and contained a grocery store, drug store, post office, doctor's office, telephone exchange, sales office, and apartments.

Born in Nebraska, Albert Farr grew up in Japan and settled in Oakland in 1891. After training as an architect, he opened his own practice in 1897 and earned his license in 1901, one of the first



The Farr cottages on Beach Road, circa 1930. Further down the road are the China Cabin with a pitched roof and the Pacific Motor Boat Club that was remodeled by Farr in 1935.



The Belvedere Land Company Building in 1914.

in California. An important architect in the First Bay Tradition, the Bay

Area shingled-style popularized by Bernard Maybeck, Willis Polk and Julia Morgan, Farr soon built up a wealthy clientele in San Francisco building mansions and luxury flats in Pacific Heights and Seacliff.

In Belvedere, where many of the

San Francisco elite were building summer villas, Albert Farr was the architect of choice. He designed the

Farr Cottages at 80-88 Beach Road, which although a single building of two story apartments looks like an English street of separate homes, each with distinctive touches, dormers, brackets and setbacks. He designed Belvedere's second schoolhouse (1903, demolished), Belvedere Golf & Country Club House (closed 1933, now a private residence), Belvedere Presbyterian Church (1900, moved in 1949, now City Hall) and several fine residences on Beach Road, Bella Vista, Oak, Madrona and Golden Gate.

"He's an amazing architectural personality who didn't miss many beats and managed to stay on top of fashion," raves architectural historian Bradley Wiedmaier. Working in many styles, Farr liked to design witty buildings that told stories and reflected the personalities of the owner. Perhaps his most famous design was Wolf House for author Jack London in Glen Ellen in Sonoma, a rustic fantasy that burnt down in 1912 before it was completed. He also designed the Tudor-inspired Benbow Inn in Garberville, the first apartments in Carmel by the Sea (now Auberge Carmel), and many large homes in Berkeley, Claremont and Piedmont.

Mysterious about his personal life, Farr was interviewed in *Pacific Coast Architect* in 1925 where he revealed that his hobby was motoring and he liked to tour around in his automobile visiting small towns and collecting antique furniture. He was said to smoke incessently. His friends called him Bert. For most of his 50-year career, Farr maintained an office on Post Street in San Francisco. He died in 1947 at age 76.



"Landfall" at 296 Beach Road, Belvedere, circa 1895. Designed by Albert Farr and completed in 1892, this was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Bridge, parents of Winifred B. Allen.



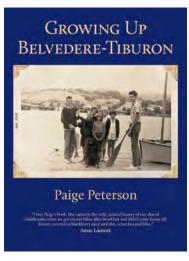
Landfall, 2016.

New Book Now Available

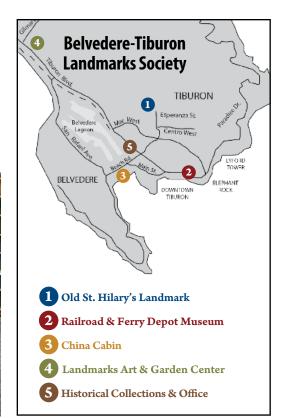
We are pleased to announce the publication of a large format book by Paige Peterson, who shares personal photos and memories of life in her hometown. Accompanying her narrative are stunning historic images from the Landmarks Archives with captions and historic commentary by Archivist Dave Gotz. Proceeds from the sale

of Growing Up Belvedere-Tiburon benefit the Belvedere Tiburon Landmarks Society.

You can purchase it at the Landmarks office. Paperback – \$35, Hardcover – \$55. More information about the book can be found at: www.growingupbelvedere.com







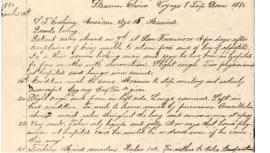
Did You Know?

Ship's Surgeon Log Discovered

History is sometimes preserved through luck **▲** and chance. Or because someone decided to repurpose something or reuse it as scrap paper. Or saw something thrown out, thought it was interesting, and decided to save it.

That's how Landmarks History Collections acquired a copy of the ship surgeon's logbook for the P.S. China which was found in 1997 by garbage workers in San Francisco and given to the National Maritime Museum. Still mostly intact, with only a few dates and pages missing, it contains the detailed records of medical cases and treatments made aboard ship on each of its ocean voyages in different sloped and loopy handwriting along with notes, figures and scribbles made by someone at the ship scrapyard where the China ended her days in 1886.





Excerpt from China surgeon's logbook, March 12, 1880. (S.F. Maritime Museum). Painting of the P.S. China by John Manca, 1979.

The P.S. China was a huge wooden paddleship steamer that travelled the San Francisco-Yokahama-Hong Kong route for the Pacific Mail Company from 1867 to 1879, carrying passengers, letters, packages, money and freight. The ship's surgeon, hired for the round-trip voyage in San Francisco, treated first class and steerage passengers and crew with whatever medical supplies he had on hand – burns, bruises, fevers,

hernias, sunburn, alcohol poisoning, and almostdrowning in the middle of the ocean.

Today the China Cabin, the elegant social saloon from the P.S. China's top deck is maintained by the Landmarks Society on Beach Road. We look forward to showing you this extraordinary historic site and telling you some of its many stories when we can again reopen.

Planning & Replanning Intimate Weddings

While many couples have had to change their marriage plans in 2020-21, there have been some wonderful weddings held at Landmarks this year and there are more to come. Still, it's been difficult. Not only for the couples who've had to put their plans on hold, or rethink them totally, but for us here at Landmarks who depend on rental income from our historic venues for our preservation efforts.

While sooner or later, we will once again be able to celebrate larger weddings and special events, no one knows just when that will be. So early last year, Landmarks Board made the decision to refund all wedding deposits for cancelled dates and allow couples to rebook without penalty. Since County public health rules regarding social gatherings and event venues change frequently, staying flexible is key, as is coming up with creative solutions that fit our couples' unique personalities.

Executive Director Patty Flax, who handles Landmarks' event rentals, has been a wedding planner and coordinator for 15 years and has seen and organized hundreds of weddings and life event celebrations. Recently, we sat down via Zoom to ask her some questions:

What's the biggest challenge right now?

Well, for us it's that our venues are still closed indoors – Old St. Hilary's, China Cabin and the

Art & Garden Center. And, when we open again it may be only for smaller groups, 25 percent or maybe 50 percent occupancy. But what's unique about our sites is that they all have beautiful outdoor areas with gorgeous views. They speak to people. And couples seem to know right away if they will work for them. There's tremendous pent up demand so we're seeing a lot of interest and starting to book out dates in 2021 and 2022.

Are today's weddings very different?

Yes, the pandemic provided an opportunity for couples who really wanted to elope but may have felt pressured by their families to have a big traditional wedding to have a more intimate ceremony. Now they have the chance to have that "just us" experience and make it truly reflective of them. In January, we

hosted an intimate wedding for a couple that are both keen sailors. They started their wedding day by sailing across the Bay to Sausalito then jumped into a classic Austin Healey, stopping to take pictures on their way to Old St. Hilary's landmark where they exchanged their vows on the chapel steps overlooking the Bay. Fabulous!

How do couples include their family and friends?

Today's technology makes a huge difference. In November, a couple planned a photo shoot on the deck at China Cabin with a view of the City. George wore a kilt and Virginia a



gorgeous beaded ball gown. They videotaped their time together to send to their friends and family around the world, and afterwards we opened up the elegant China Cabin for them so the two of them could have a dance inside. We've learned there's quite a lot that couples can incorporate in their celebration that is unique to them.

Will big weddings ever come back?

They will, but I think small intimate weddings will always be popular. In my view, those are some of the most

memorable and fun because the bride and groom can relax, have some time together, be present and really enjoy their day. It really comes down to what's important to you and the memories you want to look back on at your 1st, 5th and 25th anniversaries.

To talk to Patty about your wedding plans or arrange a venue tour, email societyrentals@gmail. com or call 415-819-9927.



HOTO BY JERE VISALLI

History Collections Donations

September 2020-February 2021

Thank you to the generous donors who gifted Landmarks with their historical treasures for our museum and archives.

Fred Codoni - NWP Railroad timetables.



Francis Brooks – Photos and biographical information about Ray Coombes including signs

from Lou and Ray's Mobil gas station and Ray's Chevron.





Thank You!

Gary Lucas for fixing the failing rail at the Railroad & Ferry Depot Museum.

Tiburon Boy Scout Troop 48 for volunteering for a gardening day at the Art & Garden Center.

Jack Fiorito for keeping our spirits up with his flag selection and devising a solution for our unrigged southernmost flags.

Alison Pense for her tireless work at Old St. Hilary's Chapel and on the Tiburon Ridge to protect endangered wildflowers.

Bob Finch for keeping a vigilant eye at all times on Old St. Hilary's Chapel.

Ostaggi Plumbing and Eddie Herrel for installing two new water spigots at Old St. Hilary's Chapel. Peggy Hodge, Cathy Larson and Suzanne White for their commitment to making the gardens at the Art & Garden Center resplendent.

Hadley Construction for the loan of a dumpster for the Art & Garden Center cleanup.

Lee Darby for her excellent proofreading skills. Paige Peterson for the gift of her time and talent while creating *Growing Up Belvedere-Tiburon*.

Don't Forget the Tiburon Thrift Shop

The Tiburon Thrift Shop and Boutique is not open at this time, but window shopping

is encouraged.
The windows are
swapped out every
two weeks and if you
see something you
like, you can email
Tiburonthriftshop@
gmail.com and make
arrangements to pick
up your treasure.



Cleaning out your closets? The Shop is accepting clothing and

accessories, handbags, jewelry and collectibles. Call 415-858-5766 to arrange a drop off.

Landmarks Historical Society is one of five nonprofits that benefit from sales at the Tiburon Thrift Shop and Boutique.

Join the Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society

Please join us as a member of the Landmarks Society. Your membership directly supports our mission

and makes
Tiburon and
Belvedere's
history a
meaningful
part of everyday life in
our community. Help us
continue to
preserve and
share our his-



A Pictorial History of Belvedere 1890-1990

tory by maintaining our beautiful historic venues and providing free access to our Historical Collections and archives. Make your tax-deductible gift today.

BENEFACTOR \$5,000

Special Benefits: A private event at Old St. Hilary's, China Cabin or the Art & Garden Center for three hours. A print of the Northwestern Pacific Railway Map (23 X 48"). Four tickets to a future concert of your choice at Old St. Hilary's.

GUARDIAN \$2,500

Special Benefits: A private event at Old St. Hilary's, China Cabin or the Art & Garden Center for three hours (Monday – Thursday). Two tickets to the concert of your choice at Old St. Hilary's.

STEWARD \$1,000

Special Benefits: Two books of your choice on local landmarks and history. A print of the Northwestern Pacific Railway Map (9.5 X 20"). Two tickets to the concert of your choice at Old St. Hilary's.

HISTORIAN \$500

Special Benefits: A book of your choice on local landmarks and history. Two tickets to the concert of your choice at Old St. Hilary's.

PATRON \$250

Special Benefits: Two tickets to the concert of your choice at Old St. Hilary's.

PRESERVATIONIST \$100

Special Benefits:
A copy of A Pictorial History of Belvedere 1890-1990.

FRIEND \$60

Celebrating sixty-two years of Landmarks.

Visit the Landmarks' office to pick up your book or tickets to a future concert. All donors receive a Landmarks car or window decal.

Landmarks New Members and Supporters

We are grateful to all our members and supporters, new and returning, for their generous contributions to preserve our local history.

January 2020 to present

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