



THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

Working to preserve Balboa Park's historic architecture, gardens and public spaces since 1967.

Fall 2013 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



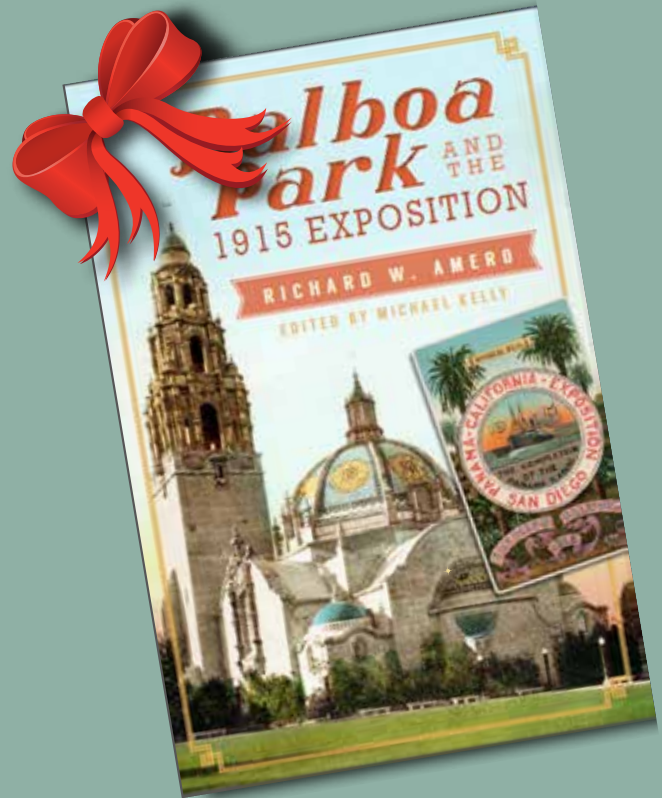
Local historian writes book on 1915 Exposition

San Diegans will soon discover what our 2015 Centennial commemorates. Newly published by The History Press, this softcover book contains the work of local historian Richard Amero, who died late last year. For years Richard researched

and wrote about Balboa Park history. He was especially interested in our two expositions—the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, and the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. He asked us several times to publish his work as a book, which included both expositions and several related chapters and articles on Balboa Park—more than 1000 pages of text without images! I quickly realized that just one book would be impossible. With the 2015 Centennial of the Panama-California Exposition fast approaching, we chose to publish this book. It will be in gift shops, book stores, and on-line for this Holiday season.

The Balboa Park Alliance (BPAL) had agreed to support and fund a 2015 project called the Panama-California Exposition Digital Archive. BPAL comprises The Committee of One Hundred, Friends of Balboa Park, and the Balboa Park Trust at the San Diego Foundation. The Digital Archive is collecting thousands of digital images of photos, albums, documents, souvenirs—anything to do with San Diego's first exposition that was created between 1909-1918, when the military turned Balboa Park back to the city after WWI. We scan or photograph the items and return them to their owners. As the Digital Archive project grew additional support has come from County of San Diego Supervisors Ron Roberts, Pam Slater-Price, and Dave Roberts. Individual contributions have added to the funds available for this

project. The images collected so far provided nearly all that was needed to illustrate Richard Amero's book.



Balboa Park and the 1915 Exposition will make a wonderful gift for someone who loves Balboa Park. Available in gift shops, bookstores, and online in time for holiday shopping, this book will be of interest to students, scholars, and researchers, as well as the reader who wants to learn more about the exposition that forever changed San Diego.

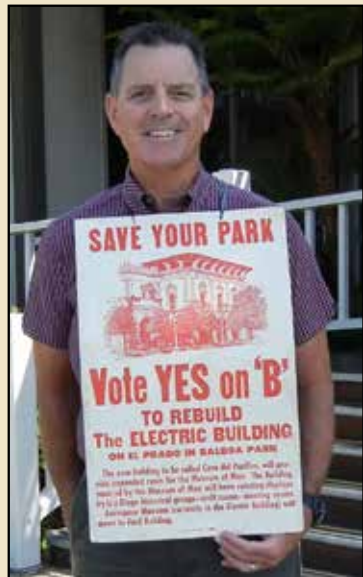
Mike Kelly
www.c100.org

Bea Evenson's Prescription: Mass Conscription

By David Ryan, M.D.

Suddenly, as if a switch were flipped at the age of 65, Bea Evenson was compelled to dedicate her remaining years to preserving environmental historical beauty.

Many people have tried to define Bea, describing her as intense, driven, single-minded, independent, stubborn, uncompromising and passionate; inspiring to many,



Dr. David Ryan with the "sandwich board" he wore for the 1973 campaign to reconstruct Balboa Park's Electric Building.

threatening to a few. One can't accomplish what she did, in such a relatively short time, without stepping on a few toes. Bea knew this and saw it as "coming with the territory" or the "cost of doing business." As her eldest grandson I can remember exactly what she would say (she said it a lot). "Oh well, it can't be helped." Just like that, it was clear that whatever mistake, failure or injustice you were about to bemoan, she would have none of it. It's done. Now, on to the next item on the agenda.

My father, Jerry Ryan, reminds me that, whenever Bea was at a social event or party, she could be seen hyper-dynamically hopping from one chatting group to another, all the while spreading the word, celebrating her vision and defining the mission. After she was finished talking at you (not with you), she would invariably close the presentation of her case with the words, "Don't you think I'm right? Don't you think I'm right?" It seemed she would keep repeating the

question until she got validation, reminiscent of a child's incessant pleas, causing the parent to eventually submit, in order to preserve their sanity.

In 1964, when Bea experienced the beginnings of her "transformation," I was 5 years old. Grandma Bea was a fun grandmother to have. She took us for ice cream, took us to the zoo, out to the country, to museums, even to the opera. She also loved camping, especially in the desert, where she and her husband, Frank (Grand Daddy), had a home on the Colorado River north of Yuma. Bea loved the rugged beauty of the desert and was a self-described "rock-hound."

She had the highest expectations for all 14 of her grandchildren. If she felt that any of us were slacking off in our studies, she wasn't above embarrassing us in front of the group by asking what kind of academic marks we were making. At the same time, accolades would be placed on those who were achieving, to further distinguish what she perceived as a disparity in effort by some. In the end, however, there was always encouragement to try harder and an assurance that she had faith we could achieve better results.

In September 1973 Grandma Bea rounded up all the grandchildren in a true mass conscription. She told us that there was a very important election coming up regarding funding for continued Balboa Park restoration. We had been aware of her involvement with this project, because much of the ornamentation that had been removed for recasting from the Food



Bea Evenson envisions Spanish Landing Park, the first successful campaign of her late-in-life activism career.

and Beverage building, which was under renovation, lined her driveway for months and hindered the use of our old "playground." Bea then told us that we needed to get the word out to friends and neighbors to support the aptly named "Proposition B" in the upcoming election.

There were promotional posters and bumper stickers in a big stack on the table. The 6-to 8-year-old grandchildren would distribute the bumper stickers to doorsteps throughout the neighborhood and my 11-year-old brother and 12-year-old cousin would be in charge stapling posters to the utility poles. As for me, I had a special job. At 13, I was assigned a duty that would offer maximum exposure to the most supportive voting population, as well as the maximum level of embarrassment for a puberty ridden male. By connecting two of the posters back-to-back, with loops of string attached to the top edges, I was able to "wear" posters as a sandwich board. So there I paced, back and forth, hour after hour, at the front steps of the San Diego Yacht Club clubhouse. I might as well have been inadvertently walking around with a taped-on message on my back saying, "kick me." No wonder the fraternity hazing I later endured seemed like no big deal to me. Do you think Grandma Bea felt any remorse for the shame I experienced? I doubt it. This kind of all-out effort is how she operated. I learned the importance of pushing the envelope of my comfort level.

While Proposition B failed to achieve the necessary votes in 1973, there was never any doubt in Bea's mind that her cause would emerge victorious. Ornamentation on the Electric Building was removed by the Committee of One Hundred shortly before arson destroyed that building in 1978. The Committee's call for reconstruction gained broad public support and the reconstructed building was named Casa de Balboa.

When I was in high school, I remember going over to visit Grandma Bea at her home. She was constantly on the telephone, talking with members of the Committee

or someone from the city, always "holding their feet to the fire." She pushed herself all day, everyday. And if she wasn't feeling well, she made her calls from bed. When she sustained a spinal fracture from an auto accident, Bea was bedridden for a time and then needed to wear a spinal brace. Further testing due to her unusually slow recovery, revealed that she

had multiple myeloma, or bone cancer. She lived the rest of her life in excruciating physical pain. Still, she continued her civic work from home as much as she could, seeing through the organ pavilion renovation with a substantial personal financial contribution.



Dedication of Bea Evenson Fountain in Balboa Park in May, 1981. Left to Right: Mickey Ryan, Margie Evenson, Patrick Evenson, David Ryan, Amy Ryan, Bea Evenson, Mayor Pete Wilson, Tom Ryan and Billy Evenson.

I remember coming together with some of my siblings and cousins for the 1981 dedication of the Bea Evenson Fountain in Balboa Park. I can still see the pain in her expression as she struggled to smile for the camera. Mayor Pete Wilson's comments at the dedication ceremony reflected a combination of respect, adoration, amazement and a bit of bewilderment. As much as he was able to appreciate the impact of the final product, Bea had been a bug in his ear for much of his time in office. I think he was a bit relieved that it was essentially over.

*"She pushed herself all day, everyday.
And if she wasn't feeling well,
she made her calls from bed."
~ David Ryan, M.D.*



THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

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Portrait of Bea Evenson, c. 1974
 by photographer Antony di Gesu.
 Courtesy of David Ryan.

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We Need Your Support!

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit, all-volunteer organization. Help us improve Balboa Park for the 2015 Centennial. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Our EIN is 95-8187105.

*Please make out your check to
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 and send it to us at:*

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