



# The Historian

Preserving Today for Tomorrow

Volume 3 Number 1

January - February 2009

## Friendship Gate

During the inception of Leisure World, the Rossmoor Corporation donated land on the community's perimeter to various religious denominations, recognizing the marketing value of easy access to various churches for the age group they were trying to attract.

In 1966, as a result of receiving complaints from residents about making long walks on busy traffic streets to attend religious services, Golden Rain agreed to install gates for the benefit of residents attending the four houses of worship located adjacent to Leisure World's walls. The churches and temple paid for the construction, administration and upkeep of these gates. The original concept was that Leisure World

*See Friendship Gate - Page 7*



Friendship Gate provides evidence that peace and harmony that can exist between people of different faiths.

## The Great Adventure — Laguna Woods Women in World War II—Part III

by Gloria Moldow, Ph. D.



Dr. Gloria Moldow

*This article is the third, and last, excerpt from "The Great Adventure" written by Gloria Moldow. The first and second excerpts appeared in the May/June 2008 and November/December 2008 issues of the Historian. You can read the original article at the Society's office. The acronyms are; ANC – Army Nurse Corps; WAACs – Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the forerunner of the WACS, WACs – Women's Army Corps; WAVES – Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (Navy); SPARS – United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve; WAAF – Women's Auxiliary Air Force (England); WASPs – Women Air Force Service Pilots and WRENS – Women's Royal Naval Service*

Mae Hanson Ankeny, a Navy nurse, and Verona Cassano, an Army nurse, were stationed in the Pacific. Ankeny, one of the first flight nurses in the war zone, treated severely wounded casualties and gave intravenous transfusions during rough and hazardous flights.

Cassano worked in a tent in Batanga, seventy miles from Manila, surrounded by barbed wire, guards—and hostile Japanese soldiers. These women appeared to have shared Helen Lang Cronck's sentiment that she "never felt frightened. We just accepted it. That's what we were there for." Many of the interviewees made a similar

*See Women - Page 4*

## MUSINGS

### ***This Month's Stories***

The last installment of *The Great Adventure* by Gloria Moldow appears in this issue. Reprints of the entire story are available at the Historical Society's office. Hopefully, Gloria will write another article in the future.



**Bob Ring**

***Lewis Moulton Still Meets Nellie Gail***, written by Donald & Mary Decker is on page 6. Residents and local historians Donald and Mary Decker have co-authored eight books including the new city history, *Laguna Niguel: Honoring the Past, Fulfilling the Present*.

The information for *Friendship Gate* was taken from several articles in the *Leisure World News* dating from 1966 through 1986. The Archives of the Laguna Country United Methodist Church also provided information and photographs.

### ***Bits and Pieces***

***Bits and Pieces*** does not appear in this issue.

On November 7, 1983 the former General Manager of Leisure World, Bob Price, presented an eight-part oral history titled "The Early Days of Leisure World" on Channel 6. Last month Channel 6 converted the ¾" video recording of this series to DVD. As a result of watching the video I became aware of *1963-1975 – A Chronological History of Rossmoor Leisure World Laguna Hills*, written by Marjorie Jones, one of the founders of the Historical Society.

This history describes the events that occurred after Golden Rain of Santa Ana filed its original Articles of Incorporation on November 19, 1962 and held its First Annual Meeting of the Golden Rain Foundation of Laguna Hills on January 18, 1966.

The narrative for each year, starting with 1963 and ending with 1975, chronicle the significant events related to both Leisure World and the Rossmoor Corporation.

As a result of reading this 81-page document, Evelyn Shopp and I are thinking about a different approach to presenting the chronological history of Laguna Woods.

## ***Dates to Remember***

### ***Historical Society's Annual Dinner Laguna Woods' 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration***

Plan to join us as we celebrate our City's 10th Birthday and honor this year's recipient of *The Strevey Award* on Sunday, March 22nd at 5:00 p.m. in Clubhouse 5. Collectible invitations will be mailed to Society members on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

You will enjoy a musical review, "*Broadway Highlights*," featuring the Meredith Hubbard Trio before dinner and after dessert.

The dinner menu includes a choice of prime rib, salmon fillet, or chicken marsala, with salad, wine, and birthday cake.

Dress is black tie optional. Price: \$30.00 a person.

### ***Nominations for Board***

We are rapidly approaching that time of year when the Society's Nominating Committee nominates people to serve on the Board. This year there are five seats on the Board.

The Board is seeking people who can:

- Help us collect current history and modernize our Archives
- Enhance our public profile through programs and outreach
- Develop our Genealogy Program.

Applications for the Board of Directors will be available at the Society's Office on and after January 26, 2009. Deadline for submissions is March 1<sup>st</sup>.

For more information please telephone 206-0150.

### ***Annual Business Meeting***

You are invited to attend the Historical Society of Laguna Woods' Annual Business Meeting to be held on **March 20, 2009** at 9:00 a.m., at the City of Laguna Woods Council Chambers, 24264 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods. The agenda includes a report on the current "State" of the Historical Society and the election of board members for the Class of 2012.

### ***Your 2009 Society Membership***

**If an orchid colored insert is enclosed with this newsletter, please *renew your tax-deductible membership* for the 2009 calendar year. Memberships received by March 31, 2009 will be included in our 2009-10 Directory.**

## ***Evelyn Hamil Shopp – 2008 Spirit of Philanthropy Award***



In November, Saddleback Memorial Foundation honored Evelyn Hamil Shopp by presenting her with one of its four **2008 Spirit of Philanthropy** awards.

With a master's degree from Yale School of Nursing, Evelyn spent more than 30 years working at hospitals in nursing administration. She became nationally

recognized for her role in the advancement of nursing as a profession for both men and women.

Before deciding where to retire, Evelyn and Bill Shopp agreed that they were looking for an active retirement community that had a quality community hospital nearby—just in case. It was in 1980 that she and Bill decided to move to Leisure World.

### ***Evelyn Volunteers***

Since then, Evelyn has devoted countless hours of volunteer service and a significant amount of financial resources to benefit the not-for-profit organizations in this community. In fact, the time she has spent as a volunteer now exceeds the years she spent working as a nursing administrator.

While settling in, Evelyn became active in Saddleback Hospital's Associates, a group that raises funds for Saddleback Memorial Medical Center (SMMC). She was the editor for their news letter. She also held the positions of Secretary and President of the Associates.

That was the background she brought to the Historical Society when she was elected to the Board in 1985. Immediately, Evelyn was elected Secretary, a job she held for eight years. She frequently quipped, "Minutes do not really substitute for writing."

In 2007 Evelyn remarked in *The Historian*, "Ever since I had a poem published in the *Daily Oklahoman* more than 70 years ago, I have had dreams of being a writer of some kind. However, I found that creating newsletters for various groups and producing family stories to accompany genealogical research interesting and rewarding."

The Historical Society had a two-page publication in

the early years. Subsequently it was expanded to a small four-page publication, but it was never published on a regular basis until 1998. As President, 1993-94, Evelyn edited the newsletter and it was produced when there was news enough to warrant it. In 1996, she prepared a mock-up of an eight-page newsletter and proposed a bimonthly publication. The Board agreed, and shortly thereafter Evelyn became the editor.

In 1985, Evelyn joined Saddleback Memorial Foundation's (SMF) Board of Directors, where she eventually served two years as Treasurer, two years as Vice Chairman and three years as Chairman. In addition, she served on the hospital's Board of Directors in the early 1990s and more recently rejoined the SMF Board for a second term.

One of Evelyn's first donations to the SMMC helped fund a surgical suite and one of her most significant gifts was to the fund-raising campaign for the Meiklejohn Critical Care Pavilion where the intensive care unit's waiting room is named in honor of Evelyn and her late husband Bill.

Evelyn is an active volunteer in the Laguna Woods community, regularly volunteering at the Village Library. She is also a volunteer as well as a member of the Board of the Historical Society. Currently, Evelyn writes the *Bits and Pieces* column in *The Historian*, and serves as our receptionist on Tuesday mornings.

Evelyn is a member of the Saddleback Kiwanis Club, serves as historian for her church and plays bridge several times a month with different groups. In addition to being a member of the Board of Directors of the Saddleback Memorial Foundation, she is a "Visiting Volunteer" for the Foundation on Thursdays, visiting patients on behalf of the Foundation.

In June, 1988 Evelyn was the Society's Leisure Worlder of the Month. Ever since that time she has supported this program with annual donations to the Honoree of the Month Endowment Fund.

In 1999, Evelyn's commitment to Saddleback Memorial and its surrounding community earned her the distinction of the first Spirit of Philanthropy event's Community Leader of the Year award. A decade later, Evelyn still remains steadfast in her dedication, vision, leadership and financial commitment to the hospital and has been recognized as a 2008 Philanthropist Honoree.

**Women (from Page 1)**

unsolicited comment. “We never could have had this experience,” Moncure said. Wentz echoed her sentiments. “I reveled in the excitement and danger,” she said. When Adalyn Bonin, an ambulance driver was involved “in the midst” of the El Alamein battle, she “felt part of a major effort” and found it “fantastic and energizing.”

**Mae Hanson Alkeny**

Service had its lighter side. While Penny Mercer Baker’s top-secret clearance as a driver and courier placed her in danger at times, it also provided her with the pleasure of driving celebrities and top brass around. She escorted Mamie Eisenhower on her visits to the base. On other occasions she drove General Eisenhower and his friend Kaye, along with their dog Penny to their “romantic hideaway.” Phyllis Goldman Benveniste, another driver with high-level clearance was assigned to celebrity Captain Gene Tunney, the former world heavyweight boxing champion.

All the women spoke of the lifelong friends they made and more than one emphasized that she turned down a promotion or an opportunity to go to Officers’ Training School to remain with her buddies.

**Shirlee Gloger Abrams**

There was “great camaraderie,” Ann Weston Gilbert and others recalled, and in some locations there was a lively social life. With 50 “girls” and 500 men, there were always parties, Shirlee Gloger Abrams recalled, although she had to remain on 24-hour call.

Ninetta Chapman, a Navy nurse who instructed corpsmen to get them ready for shipboard duty, thought the music and dancing were great for morale and “a vital part of our life.” The fraternizing had unanticipated benefits as well. Baker, Doris Rank Phillips, Brenda Ross, Mary Waltern Moncure, Thelma Wainz, Ankeny and Delores Huber all met their husbands while in the service. Ankeny married while on a layover in France; Moncure married the son of the general for whom she worked.

Some servicewomen experienced something they never had anticipated—discrimination. Abrams was shocked by the anti-Semitism rife at boot camp. At the end of the first week when members of her group overheard the lieutenant order her to go to synagogue, they realized that she was Jewish and rushed at her screaming, “There’s a Jew. There’s a Jew.” They “took my clothes off and tore at my hair,” she said. A few of her sister SPARs came to her rescue and covered her up, she recalled. It was a traumatic experience but one which changed her attitude. Abrams took her new friends with her to synagogue, although she had never been to religious services before herself and decided that “If I was proud of what I was, people would respect me.”

Muriel Friedman Tuteur, also Jewish, was “appalled” by discrimination toward African-Americans she witnessed. At the boot camp near Columbus, Georgia, whites could use the swimming pool five days a week. The black WAC detachment used it the next day. The following day it was emptied and cleaned so the white women would not have to swim in water that the black WACs had “polluted.” Tuteur and five other women went into Columbus and deliberately sat in the back of the bus “to make a statement.” “What were we fighting for?” she complained.

**Muriel Friedman Tuteur**

Not surprisingly, sexism was another problem. Although the nurses were generally welcome wherever they were stationed, they still ran into occasional gibes. “It was still a man’s world, even though we carried a man’s load,” said Cronck, an Army nurse in a field hospital near the front lines. General Halsey personally told Ankeny, a lieutenant in the Nurse’s Corps, to “get out of this man’s Navy and have children.” Chapman, a Lieutenant Commander, complained to Eisenhower that the services awarded promotions to women much slower than to men.

**Ninetta Chapman**

No matter what job they held, women’s behavior had to be above reproach if they did not want to be identi-

**Women (from Page 4)**

fied as one of the “lesbians and prostitutes the women’s service was full of,” the male recruits warned Abrams. “I never did find a lesbian or prostitute,” only other women, Abrams said. Molly Landau Busch, who joined the WACs in 1943 encountered similar rumors and prejudice. “The public hated us,” she said. The women could not go into a Charleston restaurant without a male escort.

**Beverly L. Beesmeyer**

Political opposition to women in the service, particularly in jobs considered in the male domain, reinforced sexist attitudes. The Air Force refused to admit the WASPs into their ranks and classified them as civil servants. As a result, the women received no military or veteran’s benefits and had to arrange for and pay for their off-base

quarters as well as their food and transportation. Male pilots “picked on the women,” Beverly L. Beesmeyer said, and would turn their backs when the women entered the mess hall. When a sister WASP was killed in the line of duty, Beesmeyer recalled that she and her mates pooled their money to ship the body home for burial. Thirty-eight women did lose their lives, she reported. The courtesies the female pilots received, or failed to receive, often depended on the attitude of the Commanding Officer. Advance bases were better, she noted, because the “guys coming back were more supportive.” Recognition of the WASPs valorous contributions finally came in 1977 when, with the urging of Senator Barry Goldwater, who had himself trained with the women pilots, the government granted the WASPs retroactive GI status and benefits.

Most of the female veterans who participated in the History Project received more timely recognition. All seventy-five of the women who responded to the questionnaire had at least one medal or commendation—most several, especially those who participated in the European or Pacific theater. In addition to those ribbons and medals, Baker was awarded the American Defense Service Medal and the WW II Victory medal. Helen E. Brown, a medical and surgical flight nurse who was later chief of nursing services, received the Army Commander Medal with an Oak Leaf Cluster and the Legion of Merit. Cronck received two Bronze Stars. Busch was

awarded a Bronze Battle Star as well as the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon and the Philippines Liberation Ribbon. In the British service, Adalyn Bonin received three battle stars, including one for her participation in the Battle of El Alamein; Anne Gilbert received a special medal from the Queen.

**Dr. Adalyn Bonin**

Despite the dangers, indignities, boredom, discomfort and discrimination these marvelous Laguna Woods veterans experienced, they recalled their service as a “great adventure,” in the words of more than one interviewee—one they would not have missed. “We never could have had this experience,” Moncure said. When Bonin, an ambulance driver, was involved in the El Alamein battle, she “felt part of a major effort” and found it “fantastic and energizing.” Despite difficulties she confronted, Beesmeyer would not have traded the experience. “I felt privileged” to fly those planes, she said.

Once the war was over, most were eager to leave the armed forces and get on with their lives. The vast majority married and settled in to a busy domesticity. During the fifties, in a period of suburban “togetherness” and stay-at-home moms, a few of the women who had married bucked this trend and went to college or worked outside the home. Ankeny went to school to get a medical degree, but dropped out when she became pregnant. Ross ran a clinic in Paris with several doctors and ultimately taught at a university. Jeanne Samelov Dworkin used the GI Bill to work toward an advanced degree. Tuteur, with a sociology degree from the University of Chicago, became a caseworker for Cook County, Ill. Baker volunteered at the VA hospital.

**Jeanne Dworkin**

Some of the women interviewed never did marry. Of these, a few became career service personnel. Helen E. Brown retired in 1967 as a Lt. Commander, chief of the nursing service. Chapman also retired as a Lt. Commander, the highest rank, *by law*, that women could attain. Sergeant Nettie Smith retired as a photographer from the army. Others attempted to build on their service experience in the civilian world. Bo-



Lewis Fenno Moulton

## ***Lewis Moulton Still Meets Nellie Gail***

**By Donald & Mary Decker**

***Have you ever been stopped by the traffic light at the crossroads of Moulton Parkway and Nellie Gail Road?***

When next you go by this intersection imagine a celebration of the marriage of these two Orange County

pioneers as they still meet every day at this corner.

Lewis Fenno Moulton was born in Chicago Illinois, in 1854 and grew up in Boston. At the age of 20, yearning for adventure and an outdoor life, he traveled around Cape Horn to California where he began herding sheep on the San Joaquin (later Irvine) Ranch. After a brief meat business venture in San Francisco, Moulton returned to the Saddleback Valley to begin leasing parcels of land until he could purchase them for himself. By 1895 he had acquired all of what was old Rancho Niguel, Juan Avila's original Mexican land grant made in 1842.

After Moulton took on a partner for his expanding property, Jean Pierre Daguerre, the two continued acquiring land until the original 19,000-acre ranch grew to nearly 22,000 acres in the early 1900s. This area encompassed present-day Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Woods and Laguna Hills.

Moulton married Nellie Gail, a schoolteacher from Nebraska and daughter of an Aliso City (El Toro) storekeeper. They built a home next to the Daguerres and raised two daughters, Charlotte and Louise. Their home stood at the present-day Oakbrook Village site in Laguna Hills near the warehouses and railroad siding essential to the ranch activities.

Moulton is remembered as an unassuming man characterized by kindness, wit and generosity. He regularly hosted fiestas for all his workers and neighbors at harvest time. Many of these took place in barns on the ranch property. After a particularly severe brush fire, Moulton added an annual barn dance honoring the firefighters who had helped save his ranch.

Lewis Moulton died in 1938 at the age of 84, passing on his two-thirds interest in Rancho Niguel to his widow and daughters. Nellie Gail Moulton sold

3,000 acres to Ross Cortese in 1962 for the development of Leisure World. She then lived in Leisure World until her death in 1972.

We who live on old Moulton Ranch property share a love of this land with Lewis Moulton and Nellie Gail and are reminded of their pioneering spirit whenever we pass their crossroad.



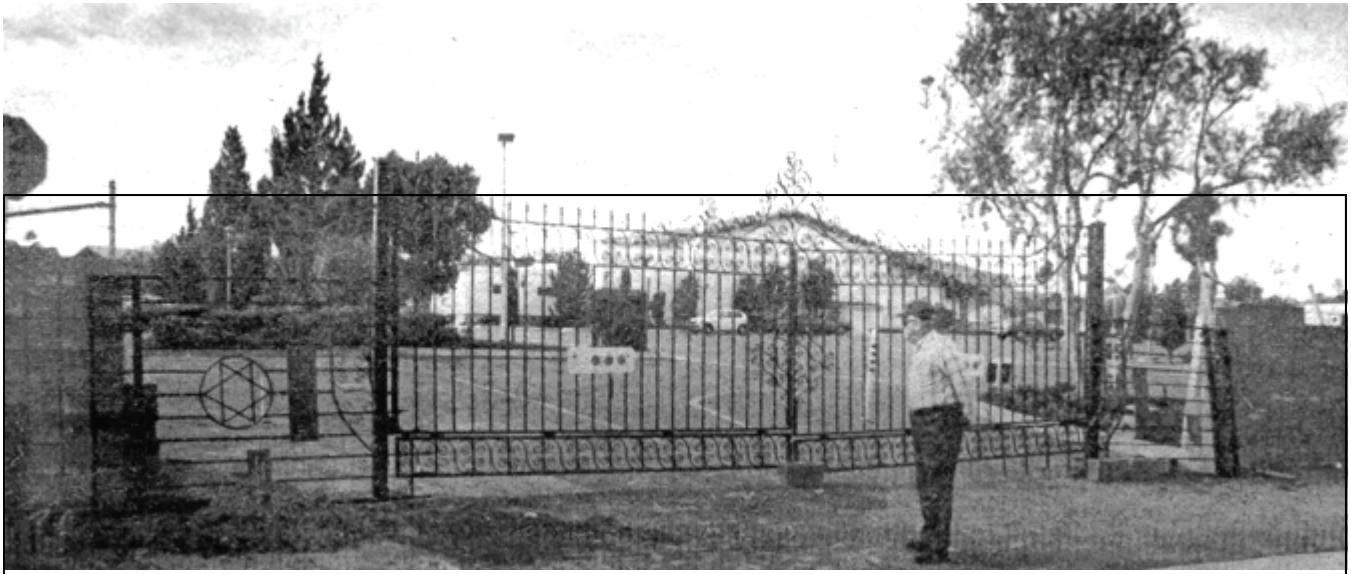
Nellie Gail

### **Women (from Page 5)**

nin, who never completed high school, discovered how much she enjoyed teaching when she taught German for the Army of Occupation. She eventually completed her doctorate and taught at a local college until she retired. Beesmeyer, unable to get a job as a pilot after the war, found work checking out pilots at small airports and later ferried light planes from factories to their destinations. Eventually she ran her own successful business.

Whatever these women did in the sixty years following the end of WW II, they recalled their service years with a fresh immediacy as the greatest adventure of their lives. They were role models when few existed for their daughters and sons and nieces and nephews—the “baby boomers” born just after the war who fueled the cultural changes resulting in the civil rights and women’s liberation movements. Because of the energy, competence and enthusiasm of this “band of sisters,” it was possible for the next generation of women to explore wider horizons unavailable to generations of their predecessors. In paving the way for future generations, the women who served in WWII perhaps made the greatest contribution of all.

**Gloria Moldow received her M. A. and Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Maryland. She has published numerous articles and a book, *Women Doctors in Gilded Age Washington: Race, Gender and Professionalization*, and taught American history and women’s history. She retired from Iona College, New Rochelle, N.Y. as Dean of the Columba School.**



**Brotherhood Gate, pictured in 1986, provided access for vehicles and pedestrians between Avenida Carmel and the parking lots of Temple Judea and the United Methodist Church.**

Courtesy Leisure World News

### **Friendship Gate (from Page 1)**

Security would open the gate to allow access to the church whenever a church activity was scheduled to take place. These gates were locked at other times, and when open were checked by Security officers. After they written authorization from their church or temple, individual residents were issued keys to these gates.

On Sunday, June 22, 1969 the Congregations of the United Methodist Church and Temple Judea united in a service of memorial and dedication of “The Brotherhood Gate,” a gift to the two congregations by the late Paul I. Wynhausen, a member of Temple Judea.

“The Brotherhood Gate” opened into the parking lots of Temple Judea and the United Methodist Church from Avenida Carmel. Pedestrian gates flanked either side of the entrance, each appropriately identified with a Star of David and the Christian Cross.

Mounted on each side was a bronze plaque on which was inscribed the words from Exodus 3:5: “For the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,” one in Hebrew and one in English.

At the dedication, the Methodist Church presented a framed memorial plaque to Temple Judea which read: “to the Glory of God, a special gift of a Brotherhood Gate has been presented by Paul I. Wynhausen and directed to man’s concern for Holy Ground shared by Temple Judea and the United Methodist Church of Laguna Hills.”

There was also an access gate to St. Nicholas Catholic

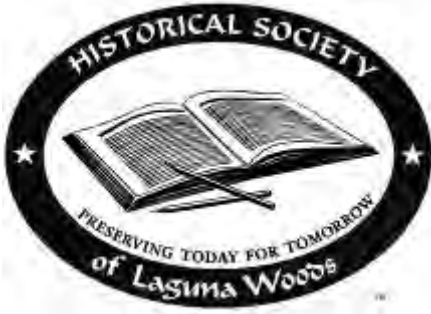
Church from United Mutual and a gate to the Lutheran Church of the Cross from Third Mutual. Unfortunately, gates permitted ingress and egress to and from Leisure World to those attending houses of worship also provided a path to those seeking a short cut to commercial enterprises on both Moulton Parkway and El Toro Road.

By 1985, it became obvious that these gates represented a significant security risk to Leisure World. At one time an estimated 1,770 keys were at large and there were numerous incidents of residents propping the gates open or leaving their keys in the gate locks.

After a series of tumultuous meetings and gatherings in late 1985 and January 1986, United and Third Mutuals voted to brick up the walls and remove the gates. In the case of The Brotherhood Gate, the Methodist Church and Temple Judea were given the option to determine the disposition of the physical remains of their gate.

It was then decided that the gate—to be called the “Friendship Gate”—would be used as a symbol of the spirit of cooperation that existed between the church and the temple, to provide physical evidence of the peace and harmony between two different faiths worshipping God in their own way and living side by side.

It is in that spirit that both congregations gather annually at a joint service on a Sunday afternoon to celebrate the meaning of Friendship Gate.



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Return Service Requested

### *Your 2009 Society Membership*

If an orchid colored insert is enclosed with this newsletter, please *renew your tax-deductible membership* for the 2009 calendar year. Memberships received by March 31, 2009 will be included in our 2009-10 Directory.

### *Annual Meeting*

Historical Society of Laguna Woods  
March 20, 2009 - 10:00 a.m.  
Laguna Woods City Hall



*Celebrate the 10th Birthday*  
of the  
*City of Laguna Woods*  
at the

**Historical Society's Annual Dinner**  
Sunday, March 22, 2009— 5:00 p.m.

### **THIS ISSUE**

<b>Great Adventure Part III</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Friendship Gate</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Remember These Dates</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Musings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Evelyn Shopp Honored</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Lewis Moulton Still Meets Nellie Gail</b>	<b>6</b>