



# THE INNSIDER

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## Happy New Year!

This year has certainly been full of ups and downs, and I want to thank you all for all you do as Docents and Volunteers of the Mission Inn Foundation. No matter what the future holds, there's an important role for Docents and Volunteers in it. If we emerge victorious, then our work of rebuilding this house and repairing our relationships will rely on your ambassadorship not only to the public, but to hotel staff as well. It will mean that we, collectively, focus our energies on aligning the hotel and Foundation so that we as partners can support each other completely. If the Foundation is forcibly removed, then we will rely on you to help us recraft the purpose and mission of the Foundation, to chart a new future for our organization, which may look like nothing like our past. But there *will* be a future, and you are in it. Cheers to a new year, full of challenges and opportunities, and for making this journey together!

Jarod

## Mission Inn Foundation Goals for 2024

1. Offer monthly evening programs, beginning with the January exhibit opening of "Wish You Were Here."
2. Maintain existing educational programming, including Hands on History, First Sundays, and Traveling Trunks.
3. Introduce a new fundraising event.
4. Create a more robust social media feed, with post and blog elements.
5. Transfer all collections to the two new offsite workspaces, allowing for better conservation, care and use in exhibitions.
6. Continue developing new inventory for the store.
7. Create a more engaging and exclusive membership benefit program.
8. Keep our heads on straight!



## Keep Calm and Carry On

Article & Photo: Jordana Jacobs

In keeping with our lease agreement, the Mission Inn Museum recently reduced daily Landmark tours from four or five per day to three. Since the timing coincided with Festival of Lights, the most popular time of year for hotel tours, the Mission Inn Foundation worked feverishly to meet the demand. The Foundation began offering perimeter tours and slideshow lectures to cover group tours that had been cancelled. In all, docents conducted 99 Landmark tours, 5 perimeter tours, and 11 lectures. This wasn't the first time the museum offered these additional tours. Starting in the summer of 1989, after the original opening of the Inn fell through and the second class of docents had graduated, the MIF began the "Sidewalk Strolls." These were free perimeter tours starting at 6<sup>th</sup> and Main. They were very popular for a number of months. Overall, the response from visitors during this recent FOL was positive, and docents and MIF staff displayed the utmost flexibility in hosting our guests.



*Nancy Follett leads lecture in exhibit space.*

## Next Docent Forum: The Canals of Riverside

Riverside's water history is a fascinating story of luck, perseverance, and good foresight. If not for a plentiful amount of good water, Riverside's orange industry would have never existed. Author and researcher Steve Lech delves into the development of the three main canals that brought the precious fluid many miles from the Santa Ana River to the orange orchards of Riverside and what that meant to the city. Mark your calendar for Sunday, January 21 at 2 p.m.

# Mission Inn “Bloopers” Docent Forum Article: Steve Lech

On November 5, the Continuing Education for Docents Committee offered the first docent forum for the 2023-2024 year. At this forum, we played “Mission Inn Bloopers” with multiple-choice and true/false questions based upon information that is being heard on tours by the Peer Review Committee. It was a light-hearted time while taking a serious look at some of the less-than-factual information that is being said on tours. Here is a recap of the information, with correct information in italics and supporting information and/or erroneous statements following in parentheses:

1. The wooden medallions of the saints were originally in the Presidential Suite. Why were they subsequently moved to the St. Francis Chapel? - *They were moved to the Chapel at the time of its construction* - (not because Frank Miller didn't think it was a good idea to have saints' emblems in a drinking establishment).

2. What is the function of the small doors that are visible in the Paseo? – *We don't know* – (but not because of a secret entrance to the basement or to keep Aunt Alice away).

3. Why did C. C. Miller come to Riverside? – *To do survey work for the tin mines south of Riverside* (not to build the canals or start the Glenwood Hotel).

4. True or False - In the 1970s, just one vote kept the Mission Inn from being torn down and replaced with a parking lot – *False* - (Per Bob Bowers (former City Councilman and Redevelopment Board member), there were several “4-3” votes to further subsidize the Inn over the span of the City's ownership. Per Doug Shackleton (former Redevelopment Director for the City of Riverside), there was never a development proposal, public or private, for the Mission Inn block).

5. True or False - The Parent Navel Orange Tree was planted by President Theodore Roosevelt on the day the Mission Inn opened – *False* – (The tree was transplanted by President Roosevelt on the morning of May 8, 1903, about 2½ months after the Inn opened on February 20, 1903).



6. True or False - The Parent Navel Orange Tree that President Theodore Roosevelt helped transplant in the Mission Inn courtyard lived for about 20 years – *True* – (The tree died around 1922).



7. L. C. Tiffany approached Frank Miller about purchasing the eight large church windows for the Mission Inn because the church was being removed. How was he able to offer the windows to Frank Miller? - *L. C. Tiffany was a member of a committee specially formed to disburse the church's artifacts when the decision was made to*

*tear the church down* – (Tiffany DID NOT keep a clause in his contract with the church that allowed him to reclaim the windows if the church was ever removed. That is the old story and subsequent research by Ursula Dube has shown the italicized statement to be correct).

8. Who headed the Japanese delegation that came to Riverside in 1929 to give Frank Miller the Order of the Rising Sun medal? - *Japan's Consul (emissary) from Los Angeles* – (The Japanese Consul from Los Angeles acted on behalf of Emperor Hirohito. No family member, including his sons who were not born yet, represented him).

9. True or False – The League of Nations (or the United Nations) used to meet in the Rotunda of the Mission Inn? – *False* – (However – at the Institute of World Affairs meeting held December 7 – 12, 1942 at the Mission Inn, several of the delegates were “officials who had sat in on the Versailles Treaty signing and others who have spoken from the floor of the League of Nations . . .” (Riverside Press, December 1, 1942 – Thanks to Barbara Burns).

10. The day Louis Comfort Tiffany left the Mission Inn, he expressed an interest in the Nanking Bell. What happened next? - *Frank Miller indicated it was not for sale, and after a not-so-pleasant exchange, Tiffany left* – (Tiffany was in fact quite upset at Miller's refusal. However, Tiffany never offered him a “blank check” or did he ever throw his checkbook at Miller, hitting him in the chest).



11. True or False – It is the responsibility of both the Lead and the Assist to tell tour guests where to stand – *True* – (The tour Lead should indicate where the guests should stand in several places, such as the front walk, where their presence may hinder other guests. The Assist should round up stragglers).

12. True or False – Aunt Alice appears on the Old Adobe in the famous picture of President Roosevelt transplanting the Parent Navel Orange Tree? – *False* – (Per research by Barbara Burns, Aunt Alice was in the kitchen ensuring that the planned breakfast went off smoothly).

13. True or False – As the Lead, you may dismiss your tour guests at the Main Street entrance to the hotel at the end of any tour. – *False* – (Tour guests should ALWAYS be returned to the Mission Inn Museum unless it is closed).

Please keep these in mind when you are giving tours. It sounds like some of this information is the result of not getting the correct, updated information, and some of it is due to the “Telephone” game phenomenon whereby one statement morphs into something related but not true.

We’ll try to keep everyone updated – who knows, with the response we got from this forum, we may do one a year!



## A Word from Docent Council Chair Linda Ward

The Blooper Continuing Education Forum on November 5th was well attended, informative, and fun. The quiz questions covered topics where Peer Review has heard renditions that were either a little fuzzy or mistaken. If you couldn’t make it, you missed a good time. Thank you, Continuing Education Committee, for rewarding correct answers with a sweet treat.

On the topic of bloopers and fact checking, don’t forget we have volunteers from the Mentor and Peer Review Committees (with the backing of the History Committee) who can fact check your scripts. For that matter, they can check your favorite story, too. If you would like a review, send it to [larsen@missioninmuseum.org](mailto:larsen@missioninmuseum.org). The subject title should be Script Fact-Check.

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Mission Inn Run

The 46th edition of the Mission Inn Run, held on October 22, marked a historic milestone for the Mission Inn Foundation, emerging as the organization's most successful fundraiser to date. With over 5700 enthusiastic participants converging for a day of running in Riverside, California, and an estimated crowd size exceeding 20,000, the event achieved unprecedented success.

One of the standout features of this year's Mission Inn Run was its remarkable scale, almost breaking into the top 100 largest races in the nation. The surge in participation reflected the growing popularity of the event, drawing runners from various backgrounds, age groups, and fitness levels. The Mission Inn Run has become a celebrated fixture not only for seasoned athletes but also for families and fitness enthusiasts seeking a fun and challenging experience.



Image, credit Michael Elderman: Docents Philip Falcone and Tony Ward (as River the Raincross) help launch the Mission Inn Run 5K race

Adding to the festivities, the Mission Inn Run introduced its charming mascot, "River the Raincross," who quickly became a beloved figure among both kids and adults. The mascot added a touch of whimsy and excitement to the event, creating memorable moments for participants and spectators alike.

Innovations were not limited to mascots alone; the Mission Inn Run underwent significant

transformations this year. A new raincross finish line added a distinctive touch to the race, symbolizing the unique character of Riverside. The Health Fair at the Convention Center parking lot underwent a revamp, offering participants and attendees an enhanced experience. The introduction of a new race course injected fresh energy into the event, providing a unique and challenging route for the runners.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with accolades pouring in for the meticulously designed shirts, impressive medals, well-crafted courses, and the overall event experience. The Mission Inn Foundation is considering maintaining many of these positive changes in the future, ensuring that the Mission Inn Run continues to evolve and exceed expectations.

Acknowledging the monumental effort required to orchestrate an event of this magnitude, MIF Director Jarod Hoogland said “I’d like to express gratitude to all the MIF Docents who volunteered their time and energy. Their dedication played a crucial role in the seamless execution of the run, highlighting the collaborative spirit that defines the Mission Inn Run.”

As the echoes of the 46th Mission Inn Run linger in the air, it's clear that this year's event not only broke records but also strengthened the bonds within the Riverside community. With the success of the fundraiser, the Mission Inn Foundation can continue its mission, ensuring the preservation and celebration of Riverside's rich history for years to come.

## *Docent Spotlight Tom Grady*

When my wife Kelly and I moved to Riverside three years ago into our historic 1928 Spanish bungalow it was with, some might consider, “a leap of faith.” The only thing we knew about the city of Riverside was that it had UCR and some hotel with an annual holiday Festival of Lights display.

As a recently retired high school principal I now found myself with some free time so I began considering different volunteer opportunities. I had one condition, unlike being a principal, it had to be fun. I remember being a bit intimidated at the first docent training and meeting the other trainees. It seemed everyone already knew so much about the Mission Inn and Riverside and had this almost familial connection to its history emotionally and for some, literally. I

wondered, since my mother did not give birth to me in the Presidential Suite did I stand a chance of being a good docent?

It was through the history classes and the advice of my mentor, Linda Ward, that I began to find “my tour voice”, the way we try to make our tours come alive. After one year of being a docent I am still fine tuning my script because I remain in awe of the story of the Mission Inn and Riverside and it is that wonderment I try to share on my tours.



*Colonel Eileen Collins Adds Wings to Fliers' Wall* Photos: Mel Gutierrez



The Famous Fliers' Wall now officially has 162 honorees. On Friday, October 27, Colonel Eileen Collins was recognized for her achievements as a NASA astronaut and as the first woman to pilot the Space Shuttle.

The Mission Inn Foundation donated the copper wings which were hung at a well-attended ceremony in the Atrio.



Board members Walter Parks and Mel Gutierrez were in attendance, along with Docent Tom Grady who had an opportunity to tour Colonel Collins through the Chapel.

She was then the guest of honor at the Champions of Flight gala held by the March Air Field Museum Friday evening.



To learn more about Colonel Collins' achievements, visit: [https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/collins\\_eileen.pdf](https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/collins_eileen.pdf)



## **A Holiday Party to Remember** *Article: Julie Stern/Photos: Steve Jacobs*

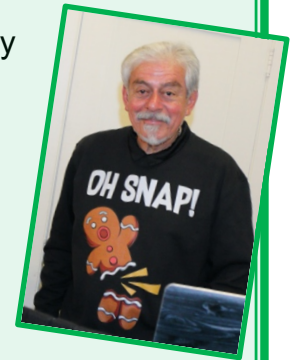
On December 11, The Mission Inn Foundation held their annual holiday party at the historic Women's Improvement Club in Riverside. Approximately 100 people attended the celebration including docents, volunteers, MIF staff and their guests. Famous local historians Barbara Burns and Steve Lech attended, along with MIF Executive Director Jarod Hoogland and many others who have contributed to the preservation of Riverside's history.



This year's chosen theme for the party was ugly sweaters. This fun and festive theme provided a light-hearted atmosphere filled with laughter and good will. We all embraced the festive spirit by wearing the ugliest, tackiest, or most outrageously colorful holiday sweater we could find. Many of us

had sweaters adorned with pom poms, flashing lights, and quirky holiday themed designs. Our goal was to be as dreadful as possible, the more outrageous, the better.

The event kicked off with a meet and greet and a full open bar. Nanci Larsen, Director of Audience Development and Administration, greeted guests at the front door and entered party goers' names into a raffle. DeeJay Art Alcaraz provided music for a warm, vibrant, and inviting atmosphere with his extraordinary technical skills and musical knowledge. AJ Huerta decked out The Woman's Improvement Club with fabulous Christmas decorations. The tables were decorated with curated bottles of wine dressed in ugly sweaters for a playful giveaway game. The well-dressed bottles in ugly sweaters floated amongst Christmas balls in many colors, pinecones, and Christmas candy. There was also a festive Christmas backdrop for photos to capture memories with our friends and family. The decorations AJ created were elegant, yet fun, creating a colorful and light-hearted ambience for all to enjoy.



After settling down at our tables, we all enjoyed a Christmas feast to remember. The buffet was served up by McGrath's Catering and didn't disappoint. The menu included traditional Christmas dishes such as turkey, stuffing, seasoned potatoes, and cranberry sauce. The main course was followed by pumpkin, pecan, and apple pies. The food was delicious and abundant, affording many to go back for seconds.

After the meal, The Mission Inn Foundation gave away 10 baskets filled with Christmas gifts that were delightful, festive, and embodied the spirit of the holiday season. After the Christmas raffle, prizes in four ugly sweater categories were awarded. The crowd was awed by the spectacular and gaudy sweaters that a docent's imagination could create. Joyce Lyons coordinated an awesome panel of judges who stealthily circulated throughout the crowd to choose four winners in four different categories. The winners were: Jean Eiselein and Randy Bruce for the You Gotta Be Kidding category. They wore flashy matching suits lighted

throughout from within, with tiny glowing lights that would make any flamboyant and ostentatious influencer envious. Jordana Jacobs won for the best accessory, with her electronic billboard belt buckle advertising holiday greetings.

Catherine Copeland won the most glamorous award. Her flowing colorful tresses matched her velvet Santa Dress accessorized and adorned with ribbons, bows, fur trim and colorful beading. Stephanie Starbuck won the most creative award. Her sweater was an astonishing wonderland covered in strands of Christmas lights, ornaments, and sparkling tinsel.



Once all the winners received their awards, Docent Council Chair Linda Ward presented three docents with the honorary title of Docent Emeritus. Docent Emeritus is an honorary title bestowed upon a docent who has provided exceptional service to the foundation and made significant contributions to the organization's educational mission. A Docent Emeritus has demonstrated a deep commitment to sharing knowledge and fostering appreciation for history. The title recognizes and honors the individual's long-standing dedication and expertise. By bestowing this title, we acknowledge the ongoing value of the docent's contributions, and express our gratitude for their lasting impact on the institution and the community we serve. Cleda Givens-Bullock, Dottie Smith, and Brenda Jackson were bestowed with the prestigious title.



In closing, a huge thank you goes out to Jean Eiselein, the head of the Events Committee, and her team of docents. Jean and her crew worked tirelessly to coordinate and ensure that the event went off without a hitch and fun was had by all. At the end of the evening, many party-goers were seen hugging, smiling, and sharing a last story or two, as they sent each off with wishes for a happy holiday filled with Christmas blessings for each other and their families.



## Docent Council Nominations

Ready to dive deeper with your fellow docents? Join the 2024-2025 Docent Council! Apply by the end of February for your chance to serve. You'll attend monthly meetings and contribute your thoughts and ideas to the planning and execution of Docent Affairs.

To be eligible to serve, you must have at least one year of experience as an MIF docent and be in good standing. Interested docents should complete a written application and be willing to serve a three-year term and join a committee. Even if you don't want to join Docent Council, **all docents** are invited to join a committee and/or attend meetings. The Docent Council meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

Applications will be available in the museum and will also be available through the All Access website at [www.missioninmuseum.org](http://www.missioninmuseum.org). Nominations may be turned in at the museum desk or email Jordana Jacobs: [travel42@verizon.net](mailto:travel42@verizon.net). Nominations must be submitted on the appropriate form by Thursday, February 29, 2024.



## Docent of the Year Award, 2024

The Docent Council is accepting nominations for the Docent of the Year award. This award honors a docent or a docent emeritus in good standing who has gone above and beyond the expectations of a docent for the previous calendar year. For the 2024 award, this would include January - December 2023. Active involvement in Mission Inn Foundation special projects, membership on docent council, active membership on a docent committee, museum volunteer, and other volunteer activities are just a few ways that illustrate a nominee's qualifications for this distinctive award.

Previous recipients of this award are not eligible.

In Loving Memory of

## RONALD JOHN McCASKILL



### BORN

December 20, 1945  
Santa Monica, California



### PASSED AWAY

September 9, 2023  
Riverside, California

Born December 20, 1945, to John & Martha Jean McCaskill, RONALD J. MCCASKILL was a California native, who moved to New York following high school graduation to join the U. S. Coast Guard. He served honorably as an Aerographers Mate (weatherman) during the Viet Nam conflict period. In 1967, he left the Coast Guard and the east coast for the more auspicious climes of Southern California, where, in Indio, he began a career in law enforcement as a deputy sheriff with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. During his tenure with the Department, he worked the 1969 Coachella Valley UFW Grape Strike, was promoted to Sergeant, and eventually transferred from the Sheriff's desert station to the Sheriff's Training Academy in Riverside. While working as a Deputy Sheriff, Ron earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Pepperdine University and, thereafter, a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of California, Riverside.

Leaving the Sheriff's Department in 1984, Ron worked for Northrop-Grumman as an Accounting Manager for five years before returning to employment with the County of Riverside – first, as the Law Office Administrator for the Public Defender and then as the Administrative Manager of the County's Department of Information Technology.

Ron always said he was “born to retire”, and he finally did just that in 2002, after 30 years' service with Riverside County. But, not one to rest on his laurels for very long, he soon began to contribute his time and management talents to the Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center as an advocate, a member of the Executive Board, and, for a time, as the Center's Interim Director. Ron also volunteered with the Mission Inn Foundation as a docent and conducted engaging tours of Riverside's iconic and historic Mission Inn Hotel.

One of Ron's passions was travel. With his wife Robyn he traveled the world, visiting six of the seven continents and spending many months in residence in Strasbourg, France, and Edinburgh, Scotland, as well as shorter periods in Paris, Richmond (London) – before Ted Lasso discovered this picturesque town – and Quebec City. His final voyage – a bucket-list item – was a circumnavigation cruise of Australia, ending with a family Christmas in Kona, Hawaii. It would be less than two months after returning home from this adventure that he would be diagnosed with the disease that ultimately took his life.

Ron was an accomplished, thoughtful, articulate, and caring man. He loved his family and cherished his friends. He was proud of his Scottish heritage and looked magnificent in a kilt! Besides an abiding interest in genealogy, he spent many happy hours waging computer games/wars, building HO scale model railroad cars, collecting fine art, studying French, and enjoying a meal and camaraderie at Victoria Club.

Ron is survived by his wife, Robyn Rogers, whom he married 37 years ago in Edinburgh, Scotland, and by his brother Gary and sister Kim. He is also survived by his four children – J. Patrick, Donald, Deborah, and Kathleen – and their mother, Margaret Schwartz. He had six grandchildren – Amber, Dillon, Duncan, Hunter, Cameron, and Heather. His major complaint was that in recent years they had all scattered around the country from Washington to Montana to Colorado to Texas, Virginia, and Georgia.

There was a *Military Honors Ceremony* for Ron at the Riverside National Cemetery, on November 17, 2023 to which many friends and colleagues attended. Ronald McCaskill was a remarkable man. He touched our lives with his strength, his compassion, and his intelligent, intrepid spirit. We were truly blessed to have had a husband, father, sibling, relative, and friend like him. We will miss him dearly for the rest of our lives.

