



100 THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

Dedicated to the Preservation of Spanish Colonial Architecture in Balboa Park

FALL 2009

www.C100.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Michael Kelly

It's difficult to believe that Balboa Park's wonderful Spreckels Organ Pavilion had deteriorated so badly that, during the 1970s, there was talk of demolishing it, putting the organ in storage, and replacing it

with a parking lot. In 1974 the Park and Recreation Department recommended to the City Council that maintenance of the organ be discontinued. The City Council found the needed funds that year, and The Committee of One Hundred got involved. In 1977 the El Prado Complex, which included the Spreckels Organ Pavilion, became designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Much work needed to be done and The Committee of One Hundred committed itself to fundraising, which began in 1979 and continued in segments until 1986. Bill Callaway, president of Thearle Music Company in San Diego, chaired the Organ Pavilion restoration committee.

I first met Bill Callaway when I joined the Board of Directors in 1996. Bill attended board meetings using a wheelchair, due to his long struggle with multiple sclerosis, which had begun even before his campaign to restore the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. I developed a great respect for this man who had worked in his father's music store as a child and eventually became its owner and president. Bill's association with The Committee of One Hundred grew directly

from of his love for the Spreckels Organ.

Bill attended the first board meeting that I chaired as acting president. He would eventually resign because of his health, but he never lost his affection for Balboa Park's wonderful Spanish Colonial architecture and the Spreckels Organ. Bill Callaway

died one year ago this August. Members of The Committee of One Hundred will never forget his efforts in saving and restoring the Spreckels Organ and Organ Pavilion.



William "Bill" Callaway
1929-2008
Photo courtesy Mike Callaway

After an extensive 2005 restoration of wiring and lighting, the Spreckels Organ Pavilion looks as good as it did in 1915. The Spreckels Organ will have a new console for the 2015 Centennial of the Panama-California Exposition, funded by grants from the Legler Benbough Foundation and Las Patronas. Replacement of the aging original plumbing, still in need of funding, will complete restoration for the 100th anniversary of the Spreckels Organ and Pavilion on January 1, 2015.

Help us preserve Balboa Park's historic architecture. Make your check to The Committee of One Hundred and mail it to:

THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED
Balboa Park Administration Building
2125 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92103-4753

The Spreckels Organ and Organ Pavilion

Jim Britton, that bold and fearless architecture and music critic, characterized our Spreckels Organ Pavilion as “San Diego’s nearest equivalent to the Statue of Liberty.”

Just imagine how those present on New Year’s Eve, 1914, at the dedication of “the largest outdoor pipe organ in the world” must have felt. Wealthy brothers Adolph and John D. Spreckels had given the organ and the graceful organ pavilion to the citizens of San Diego. A large audience gathered for the history-making inaugural concert that heralded the official opening of the Panama-California Exposition. It was a thrilling occasion. Strife and warfare marred other areas of the world, but San Diego was in a celebratory mood. Locally, jubilation marked the dawn of 1915. Organist Dr. Humphrey J. Stewart played the Processional March from his orchestral Suite “Montezuma,” Haydn’s Oratorio “The Creation,” and Gounod’s Oratorio “The Redemption,” among other compositions. Impressive lighting accompanied the concert, kicking off the 1915-1916 Exposition.

Florence Christman described the Spreckels Organ Pavilion as “one of the most beautiful edifices of the fair” in her book *The Romance of Balboa Park*. The building and its colonnade served as a fitting a monument to the organ created by the Austin Organ Company. Harrison Albright had been chosen by the Spreckels as the architect of the building, which was described as Plateresque in detail. Preservation architect David Marshall has written of the pavilion that it is “in a style more Greek than Spanish.” The 3,400-pipe organ cost \$33,500, and the building cost \$66,500. By 2007 the organ had 4,518 pipes. The Spreckels took keen delight in the finished venue.

Singer Madame Schumann-Heink performed with the organ repeatedly over the years, and was a great advocate for the magnificent instrument. Christman tells us that “On the night of January 1, 1917, Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink sang ‘Auld Lang Syne’ from the stage of the beautiful organ. Fireworks spelled out ‘World Peace 1917.’ The band played “The Star Spangled Banner,” and the Panama-California Exposition was declared closed.” Three months later, the United States declared war on Germany. Attendance

at concerts increased after the United States entered the war and the custom of beginning each concert with “America” and ending with the “Star Spangled Banner” was established.



During the Exposition closing ceremony on January 1, 1917, opera singer Madame Schumann-Heink sang “Auld Lang Syne” at midnight. A pyrotechnic piece above the organ spelled out “WORLD PEACE” in glowing colors.

Preservationists have been ever vigilant over the years. Historian Richard Amero points out that there were times “... in 1948, 1957 and 1974 when politicians advocated putting the organ in storage, firing the organist, and replacing the pavilion with a more popular attraction or a parking lot.” Founder of the Spreckels Organ Society Vivian Evenson (related by marriage to Bea Evenson who was a founder of The Committee of One Hundred) recalls a move to tear down the organ pavilion and she states “Aunt Bea said ‘no, no.’”

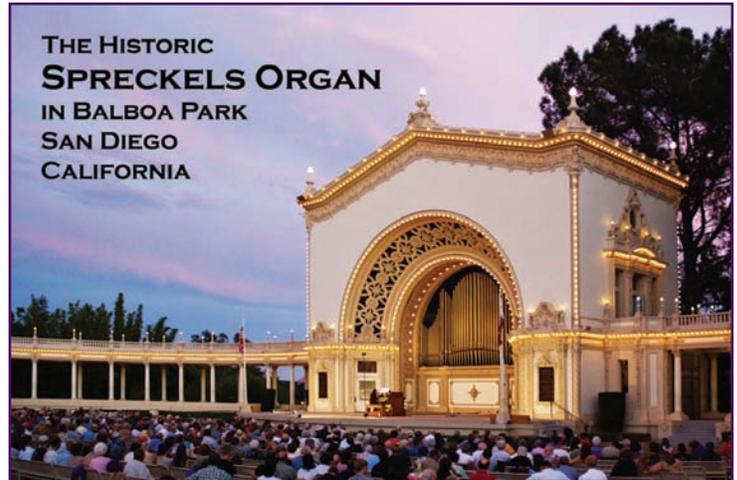
By the 1970s, there was a glaring need for renovation and restoration of the organ and pavilion. Essential repairs couldn’t be put off any longer. Edward S. Barr urged Bea Evenson, president of The Committee of One Hundred, to undertake this project. She responded by sponsoring a recital by the famed organist Virgil Fox in an appeal to the public for support. Civic Organist Jared Jacobsen and Curator Lyle Blackinton worked closely with Bea Evenson to make the restoration a reality. In 1977 president Patricia DeMarce

pledged \$175,000 from The Committee of One Hundred, to be matched by the City of San Diego. The first phase was the restoration of the center section of the Organ Pavilion, which houses the organ. Bill Callaway was chair of The Committee of One Hundred's "Save Our Spreckels" Pipe Organ Committee, which raised \$100,000 for the second phase. This phase included a new console (the third) built by the Austin Organ Company in 1980-1981 and many mechanical parts of the organ were rebuilt or replaced.

The pavilion's two colonnades were restored in the early 1980s at a cost of \$621,000. In 1985 Bill Callaway, that champion of the Spreckels Organ and Pavilion and longtime member of The Committee of One Hundred, led a campaign to raise \$85,000 to provide funds for new organ stops which had been planned in the 1981 restoration.

Autumn of 1986 saw a rededication of the Organ Pavilion after renovation of the seating and standing areas, including 614 steel mesh benches, the installation of 142,000 paving blocks, repair and realignment of utilities, and planting of honey locust trees. This was financed in part with funds raised by The Committee of One Hundred. Total cost of the restoration of the organ and pavilion was \$2 million over eight years.

The original 1914 electrical wiring was replaced in 2005 by the City of San Diego, at a cost of \$1.3 million. The Spreckels Organ Society points out that, in dollar terms, this was more than ten times the original



Booklet available for purchase at Spreckels Organ concerts.

www.sosorgan.com

Photo by Robert Harrington

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bill for the entire organ and pavilion. Actually, a tidy bit more than that.

The Spreckels Organ and Organ Pavilion are part of the legacy of the 1915 Exposition. Devoted stewards have preserved this remarkable venue for nearly 100 years. What will be a fitting legacy gift to Balboa Park's Exposition Centennial Celebration in 2015? Who will be the next generation of stewards?

Many thanks for the extensive writing and research of Richard Amero, to the Spreckels Organ Society and, as always, to the San Diego Historical Society.

Notable events at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion:

- Memorial service for President Warren G. Harding on August 9, 1923
- Services for John D. Spreckels who died in June 1926
- Memorial service for victims of the PSA jetliner and private plane crash on October 1, 1978
- Memorial service for victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing, China on June 10, 1989



When Balboa Park's West Prado Arcade was reconstructed in 2005, there was not enough money to complete this highly ornamented section in the middle of the arcade. The Committee of One Hundred hopes to raise \$500,000 to reconstruct the ornamentation that showcases this "Moorish Arch." The image on the left shows the current flat appearance of this section. The composite image on the right demonstrates how this arch would look with replicas of its original ornamentation.

Will you help make this dream a reality?

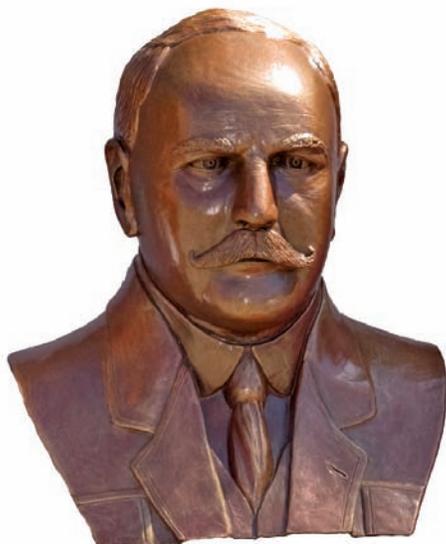


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Bust of John D. Spreckels
by sculptor Claudio D'Agostino
Photo by Robert Harrington.