



THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED

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

Fall 2012 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



2012 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

This newsletter hits the highlights of our Committee of One Hundred luncheon: the recipients of our annual Gertrude Gilbert and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue awards and a presentation on Balboa Park's Zoro Gardens at the

1935 California Pacific International Exposition that you're going to wish you hadn't missed.

The Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue award was named for the chief architect of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. The 2012 Goodhue Award went to architect Richard S. Requa, Director of Architecture for San Diego's 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. His book, *Inside Lights on the Building of San Diego's Exposition: 1935*, tells the story behind the creation of our second exposition. Requa was responsible for repair of the 1915 buildings (notably the remodel of the House of Hospitality with architect Sam Hamill) and its new Casa del Rey Moro Garden; the Alcazar Garden; the Persian Water Rug and Organ Pavilion fountains; and Spanish Village and the House of Pacific Relations (International Cottages). He added an Arch of the Future and two shallow pools to the Plaza de Panama and several buildings surrounding the Pan-American Plaza.

The 2012 Gertrude Gilbert Award was presented to Vicki Estrada at our Annual Luncheon. Gertrude Gilbert led a successful campaign in 1933 to save the "temporary" buildings that remained from the 1915 Exposition. Six of the seven buildings slated for demolition were saved and used during the 1935 exposition. Four of those "temporary" buildings have now been re-

constructed in permanent materials. Vicki Estrada has been active in Balboa Park for more than 30 years. She is a landscape architect and President of Estrada Land Planning. Vicki served for 14 years as a member of the



The Gertrude Gilbert award was presented to Vicki Estrada by California Assemblymember Toni Atkins

Balboa Park Committee and was principal author of the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Balboa Park Central Mesa Precise Plan, among many other Balboa Park accomplishments. She currently serves on the County of San Diego Historic Site Board.

Guest speaker at our Annual Luncheon was Welton Jones, longtime Union-Tribune arts and entertainment columnist. He presented a well-researched talk on the Zoro Garden Nudist Colony, one of the most memorable exhibits at the 1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition. He recounts highlights of his talk on the following pages.

2015 Centennial projects are described in more detail on our website, www.C100.org

- Panama-California Sculpture Court in the Casa del Prado
- Restoration of fountains outside the Botanical Building
- Panama-California Exposition Digital Archive

Zoro Gardens—The Naked Truth

By Welton Jones

*E*ye-witnesses who visited Zoro Gardens during the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition confirm today that they really were naked. For 25 cents, you sit for hours and watch beautiful young people—mostly female—hang out in the nude.

Actually, the handful of men usually wore trunks or loin-cloths. And the girls usually had on what they called “ghost panties.” The sort of thing called in the burlesque business a “G-string.” Otherwise, skin was in.

Zoro Garden was right next to the main gate near what is now Park Boulevard, where the crowds left the trolley and entered the Expo. The setting, with its vaguely Mayan dressing rooms overlooking a central clearing, is still there today, designated as a butterfly garden.

The gardens opened at 11 a.m. and closed at midnight, every day that the Expo was open. Well over a half-million people paid the extra 25 cents to get into Zoro Gardens during the months in 1935 and 1936 when the Expo was open.

The name had nothing to do with the sword-fighting fellow in the black mask. This “Zoro” came from Zoroaster, the Persian mystic of the 6th Century BC, borrowed by Dr. Alois Knapp, a pioneering American nudist who opened his Zoro Nature Park in Roseland, Indiana, in 1933. He had presented a brief indoor spectacular during the last

weeks of Chicago’s Century of Progress and promoters Stanley R. Graham and Nate T. Eagle, who already had a deal to bring their Midget Village to San Diego, began negotiating with the nudists, too.

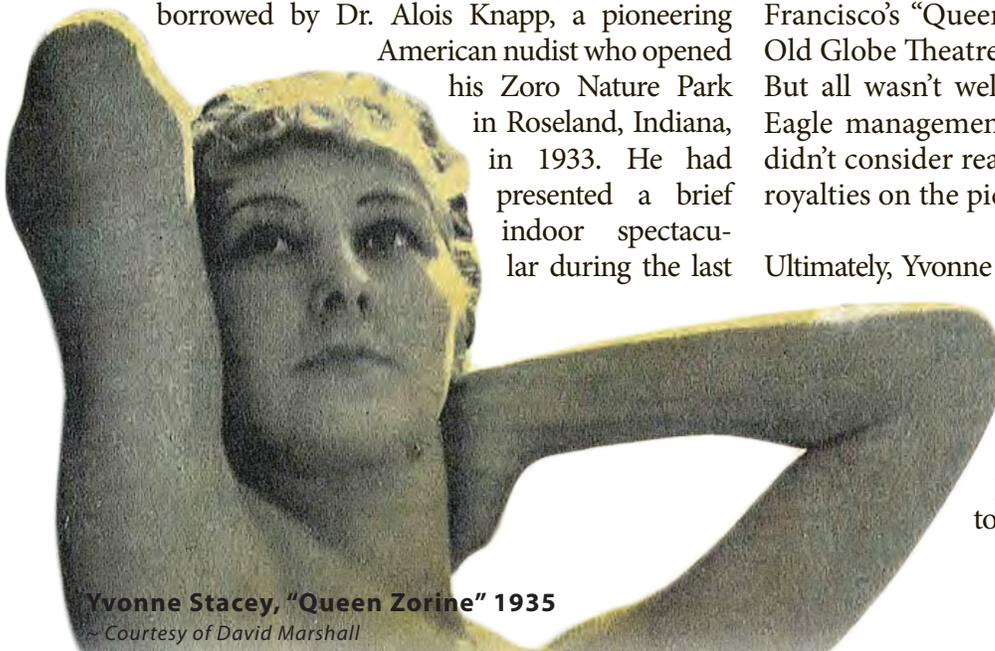
~ She defied the snickering press and panting public to insist that nudism was a lofty creed worth respect. ~

Eventually, a company of fifty “nature lovers” was assembled, led by “Queen Zorine,” 22-year-old Yvonne Stacey, one of Knapp’s most serious followers. It was Stacey’s beauty, dignity and conviction, more than anything else, that made Zoro Gardens work. She defied the snickering press and panting public to insist that nudism was a lofty creed worth respect.

When the Exposition opened May 29, 1935, audiences found Zoro Gardens to be a lush six acres of tropical escapism. The nudists, in their ghost panties, read, exercised, gossiped, played at archery and volleyball (a crowd favorite), lounged on tanned cowhide rugs and, five times a day, did their 20-minute “Sacrifice to the Sun God.” There was talk of a “death dance” and other features, but no script survives.

Zorine was a tireless trouper at keeping the ballyhoo going. She posed in the arms of Alpha the Robot, another featured Expo attraction. She shared tea with San Francisco’s “Queen of the Fair” and Elizabeth I of the Old Globe Theatre. Each queen wore her working garb. But all wasn’t well between Zorine and the Graham/Eagle management. They kept hiring new people she didn’t consider real nudists. The nudists weren’t getting royalties on the picture postcards.

Ultimately, Yvonne Stacey resigned due to “internal strife.” She told the press she already had paid \$30,000 down on a 400-acre tract in the Cuyamacas where she planned her own deluxe nudist colony. First, though, she would tour the U.S.A., preaching the benefits of “heliotherapy” to “the clothes-bound masses.”



Yvonne Stacey, “Queen Zorine” 1935

~ Courtesy of David Marshall



Visitors paid extra 25¢ to see Queen Zorine and her troupe of nature lovers

The show staggered but didn't close until the Exposition's first year ended November 11. The final attendance was announced to be 4,784,811. Records suggest the promoters cleared over \$100,000.

For the second year, Wayne Dailliard, Expo assistant manager, announced that the midgets were gone. Also the girly shows of the Midway and in Gold Gulch. But Zoro Gardens would return.

Protesters wanted an end to the indecent shows so flagrant the first year. Dailliard replied that the new Zoro Gardens show would be "a play of lights on beautiful figures." The City Council said that any problem would be handled by the police. The police chief said it looked OK to him.

In place of Zorine, when the second season of the Expo opened February 12, Zoro Gardens had the Cubitt family of Indiana, four sisters and their mom who had followed the original show out from Chicago. Their names vary a bit according to the source but the San Diego City Directory of 1936 had them as mother Anna plus Diane, Eleanor, Florence and Ruth, with various occupations, all living at 3691 Jackdaw St. in Middletown.

Everybody rapidly found that 19-year-old Florence Cubitt, her name changed to "Tanya" because "it sounds more sexy," was a natural, a tall blonde with a cheerful outdoor look. She knew what the press boys wanted to hear. "I wish I'd brought my knitting," she was saying on February 16. "I live for knitting."

The promoters flew her to New York, where they were negotiating—vainly, as it turned out—for a spot in the 1939 World's Fair. Tanya gave interviews at her hotel room...in the nude. So she got lots of ink. The

promoters had her stop for more of the same at several airports on the flight back to San Diego.

Tanya was carried through the Expo to her coronation in a sedan chair led by herald trumpets. For the rest of the year, reporters sought her out on the slow news day. She told the *San Diego Sun* about

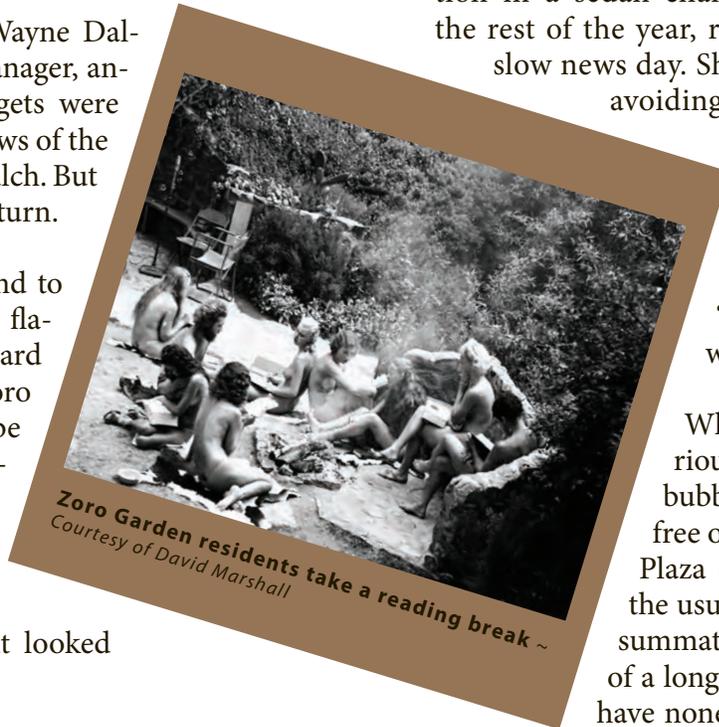
avoiding bees. About posing for artists. She noted that when the wind blew up the skirts of a drunken woman patron, all the men ogled her instead of the nudes. Said Queen Tanya: "One of those psychologists would have a picnic down here."

When the expo imported the notorious Sally Rand to do her fan and bubble dances—several times daily, free of charge, in a special stage on the Plaza de Panama—Queen Tanya sent the usual offer of tea. Miss Rand, a consummate professional in the early part of a long and distinguished career, would have none of it. "The nude is my business suit," she said. "I never appear socially in it."

Maybe Zoro Gardens was nothing more than a human zoo exhibit. But it really did happen. Yvonne Stacey really worked here. The Cubitt family drew paychecks. The publicists listed nudists from around the world and some of them did look exotic. One of the guys was a graduate dietician from Michigan State. The late Bob Cleator often claimed that at least two of the ladies had gone to Point Loma High School with him.

Stacey stayed on the road with her show. From twenty-two to fourteen girls, she ratcheted downward to a duo act with a guy in a gorilla suit. Nudist history says she died in 1954 of a lingering cardiac illness.

But it was Yvonne Stacey—Queen Zorine of Zoro Gardens—who made the most improbable of shows actually happen right here in Balboa Park.



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THE COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED
 Balboa Park Administration Building
 2125 Park Boulevard
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www.C100.org
 email: president@C100.org

Florence Cubitt
 "Queen Tanya" 1936
 ~ Courtesy of David Marshall



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 Balboa Park Administration Building
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