

History of the Construction of the Sierra Madre Rose Float Barn

Written by Roy Estoppey, 9/11/1992

Prior to 1970 Sierra Madre Rose Floats were built in a tent in the parking lot in front of and east of the Recreation building at Sierra Vista Park. John Govorchin, who was President in 1969-1970, realized that the tent had many disadvantages and a building was needed. He also realized that more time was needed to build the more complicated floats that would be required in the future. It was also necessary to have a locked facility to keep materials, tools, and equipment both during and after building the float. Also, the tent rental fee kept going up, and a tent is a difficult place to flower a float during a Santa Ana wind or a rain storm.

John decided a building fund was needed, and the by-laws were changed to provide a life membership for a fee of \$25.00. This money was to be kept in a building fund account and saved for a building. No more than 15% of the money could be used for other purposes and eventually all the money saved went toward the building.

John had the support of many of the members such as Wayne Hartwell, Larry Bevington, Tony & Ann Harris, Robert & Bernice Conner, Red & Mert Waite to name a few. They promoted the life membership as hard as they could to have money for a building.

By April 1973 there was \$1200 for a building. The city was also interested in putting in a slab of concrete to be a dual purpose facility. It was to be tennis and handball courts and a Rose Float construction site. The Association would contribute \$1200 and the City \$2000. Access to water, electricity and gas was to be provided. Anchors were to be built into the slab to accommodate a tent to be erected in November.

Work on the slab was started in November 1973 and was first used in 1974 to build floats. The City also decided to make a basketball court instead of a tennis and handball court at this location.

The new site was an improvement over the parking lot since it was level concrete and the tent side flaps could be fastened down. It still required a tent and lacked secure storage facilities. About 1979 the tent was blown down in a Santa Ana wind storm. The Association had to pay for the damage and also learned that the complete destruction of the tent would cost as much as the float. This could have happened in 1973 since the float caught fire and could have taken the tent with it. The Association decided to insure the tent which added to the cost.

In 1980 the building fund was only about \$1,800 and was never going to be enough in the foreseeable future. The Association decided to raise additional money for a building and build it as well as the float. This was a sizeable task since about \$20,000 was needed for a steel building shell to be assembled by the association.

At this time, the ladies came up with the fund raiser that made the building possible. Ann Long and Phyllis Tolle believed a boutique would bring in a lot of money. Ann Long's house became a boutique factory and the ladies went to work. Their efforts paid off in a big way and raised about half the cost of the building.

President Lee Elswood appointed Paul Magaris chairman of the fund. With help from Jan Reed, publisher of the Sierra Madre News, the drive was very successful and brought in enough additional money to buy the building.

John Govorchin was also able to get a much lower price for the building from Varco Pruden. The cost of the building with tax was \$15,324.42. John's company, Air Louvers, Inc., also supplied louvers and doors at no cost.

In January 1980, the Association advised the City that a site was needed for a Rose Float building. Meetings were held with the City Yards Committee, Parks and Recreation, and the City Council. In June 1981, the City Council approved the site for the building with certain conditions. City Engineer, Tom Kirk, and City Yard Crew under Richard Garcia would provide site plan, footing plan, clear debris, and grade.

The Association would tear down the old cow barns and the recycling center at the site. It would also put in the footings and rough plumbing for public toilets adjacent to the building. The Association would also move the recycling center to a temporary area and provide storage for newspapers and aluminum cans.

In July, the cow barns were torn down and part of the lumber was used to make a bin for the aluminum cans. Dave Duran went to his friend Bernie Long whose company, B & B Trucks & Parts, lent the Association two truck trailers. One was for the recycling center for newspaper storage and the other for storage of building materials and tools.

Bernie also delivered the building materials to the site at no cost. He brought the material from Varco Pruden, located at Turlock about 275 miles away.

In August 1981, the area was ready for the footings. At this time Carl Griffin of Griffin and Sons volunteered to become technical adviser to a group of volunteers who had little or no experience in the construction industry. With Carl's help, footings were laid out, forms were made, re-bar was put in, and concrete was poured. Dave Duran was able to get about 10 cubic yards of concrete donated from the cement companies.

Lorel Harvey, a local builder, donated labor and equipment to grade the pad for the floor. Hal Jordan and Gordon Caldwell of Gem Plumbing helped with the rough plumbing. Rebar and screens were put in late into the night before the floor was to be poured. Leonard Cinnamon provided the lighting that night. He lived in the city house about fifty feet away and helped when he could and never complained about the noise and inconveniences.

Carl Griffin teamed up with local contractor Gerard Tvvedell and Bill Thew to do the floor. Dave Duran was able to get Beaumont Concrete, B & B Red-I-Mix, and Owl Rock and Sand to contribute forty-seven cubic yards of concrete . It turned out that this was not enough and Gerard Tw edell was able to save the day by diverting several yards of concrete from one of his jobs to the float building so the floor could be completed the same day.

In September of 1981, erection of the building was started. Carl was able to get Arnold Richter of AFR Construction to contribute labor and equipment. He and his son hoisted the major columns and beams in place by crane. All the other parts were hoisted in place and bolted together by volunteers. The sides and roof are sheets of steel three feet wide held in place by self drilling and tapping screws put in place by a special drill. Only one (drill) was bought and Peter Gonzales soon learned how to use it. He put in most of the thousands of screws that hold the steel sheets in place.

Plumbing volunteers were James Clark of Sierra Madre Plumbing and Eber Bailey. Steve Hartwell of the city crew dug the trench for the telephone and electric cables on his own time. Electrical work was done by Ed Vanderpool. Ed has contributed material and a great amount of time to the building and continues to improve and upgrade the electrical wiring and equipment. Clem Bartolai made the sign for the outside of the building .

Other volunteers who contributed labor to the building are given on a separate list.

Some of those who put in a lot of hard labor beside Peter and Joanne Segar, Lee Elswood, David Duran, Doug Miller. Norm Morrison, Frank Ross, Ken Tull, and Roy Estoppey. The work did not stop with completion of the building. Footings and rough plumbing had to be put in for the outside toilets. Also, the recycling center needed to be set up at a permanent site. The Association also agreed to tear down the old Toy Loan building in Memorial Park so it could be replaced by a pavilion. This was done to obtain the material for use on floats and for the recycling center.

City Administrator James McRea found a site for the recycling center and had the City Yard workers put in the slab. He was also able to show the disposal company for the city that a bin was needed at the recycling center. They donated a large open top bin for the center. With the wood from the Toy Loan Building, Norm Morrison, Ken Tull, and Roy Estoppey put a roof on the bin and put up columns and a roof to form a shelter. The Athletic Association contributed their old building from Dapper Field and the much

improved Recycling Center was back in business in May 1982.

The final obligation to the city was to put in the footings and rough plumbing for the outside toilets. The city provided the plans and the Association put in the footings and rough plumbing in September 1982. The city had the remainder done using local contractors.

Work did not stop at this time. Fire Marshall William Kramer and Fire Chief Marc Mueller said fire sprinklers must be installed and a separate fire proof building for storage of flammable materials must be provided. Carl Griffin came to the rescue and had his friend Ray Kenz of Southwest Fire Protection design the sprinkler system. Using city pipe threading equipment, the association members installed the system.

Carl Griffin showed the association members how to design a concrete block building. He also showed them how to lay blocks and helped pour the concrete roof. His helpers were Lee Elswood, Peter Gonzales, Ken Tull, Joanne Segar, and Roy Estoppey. Ed Vanderpool wired the building and installed lights to meet explosion-proof requirements.

In 1983, it became evident that the building did not have enough room for storage and for people during the flowering of the float. The solution was to build a mezzanine. Part of it would be used for storage. It would also provide space for viewing of the float and leave the floor clear for the workers.

Carl Griffin designed the mezzanine and with a few modifications, it became what it is today. Detail drawings of the design were required as well as calculations for structural strength and seismic requirements. Richard Gerke, who is a licensed structural engineer, contributed his time to these requirements. Roy Estoppey made the detailed drawings under Richard Gerke's direction. He also modified the design to suit beams and other materials that became available.

Many steel I-beams and columns were needed. Luck was with the Association since the County Flood Control had left a large number of I-beams in the city yard. These were either forgotten or discarded and needed to be used before they rusted away. Members of the Association carted the beams to the building and spent many weeks wire-brushing them with sand-polishers. Lorel Harvey and Dave Duran were able to find a few more beams so only two had to be bought.

After the beams were cleaned, they were painted and set aside to be cut to length and have holes drilled for bolts to hold them to plates which were also cut and drilled. Peter Gonzales did the cutting and Norm Morrison drilled the holes. This was a difficult job since heavy beams had to be moved in position for drilling under a Sears Roebuck drill press.

Others who helped in this and the other jobs were Joanne Seagar, Lee Elswood, Frank Ross, Fred Klayer, Ed Vanderpool and Roy Estoppey.

Putting the I-beam on the columns was a difficult job for amateurs but they did it. The Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team was asked to help so Steve Millenbach and other members hosted some of the difficult beams in place. Peter Gonzales did most of the welding. Critical joints that required a certified welder were done by Scot A. Yoo. Others who contributed were Jim and Barbie Banis, Abbe Keith, Doug Miller, Ken Tull.

Roy and Mary Estoppey planted the hillside behind the building and the planters in front. Plants were contributed by Persson's Nursery.

Roy Estoppey was president of the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association during design and selection of the site for the building. Lee Elswood was president during construction of the building and Ginny Liskow was president during construction of the mezzanine.