DIA DE PORTUGAL 2017 A SUCCESS

Friends having a good time

Tempos de Outrora - always popular folk dancers

Serving drinks

Children dressing up as Queen Isabel & Prince Henry the Navigator
UNTAMED DREAMS - FACES OF AMERICA

Starting with the Foreword, Untamed Dreams—Faces of America felt right. It reminded me of happenings long forgotten and spoke of things that might have been. Many of the essays confirmed what I already knew and a few contradicted what I thought I knew. But either way, the book invites us to take another look at our story, the story of our immigrant past. A past that, although distant for a great majority or just around the corner for a few, shares a theme that resonates in all of us. Granted that different readers may interpret the focus of each biographical essay differently and may call themselves American, Portuguese, Azoreans, Portuguese-Americans, Luso-Americans, or any combination, Untamed Dreams—Faces of America is our story, the story of our immigrant soul, the story of our Portuguese-Americanization.

A great many of us immigrated from the Azores, Madeira, and the Continent as infants, adolescents, and adults. Some are first, second, third, and fourth generation. Many of us arrived on whaling ships and cargo ships, and some in airplanes. But many were already here to welcome us and facilitate our relocation and adaptation. Willingly or not, we had our names changed or shortened while others insisted on keeping their four or five-word name untouched. Many never returned to their birthplace; a handful returned only to come back; a few returned happy never to come back. A surprising large number had leading roles in organizing, funding, and leading Portuguese Fraternal Societies and the Holy Spirit Brotherhoods; a great number were the recipients of awards of achievement and national decorations. Most, if not all, showed pride in their heritage and cultural and religious traditions. Many had to give up their dreams of further education in order to help the parents and younger siblings, but their descendants were first in the family to complete high school and to get a university education and a degree—achieving in one generation what normally takes two or three. A handful had already left a mark before the publication of this book, but the majority would have gone unknown if it weren’t for its publication.

Untamed Dreams—Faces of America is divided into seven sections, each introduced by a poem. The sections are: leadership and distinction; relocation and hardship; the Portuguese language media; success and prosperity; labor union leadership; familial longings; and military service. Many pieces could easily have been placed in several of the sections here but the subdivisions help the reader focus on the values and special skills needed for the success in each particular one.

There isn’t one of us who will not find strands of his or her story woven in the testimonials, memories, biographical narratives, family histories, and poems that went into this tapestry called Untamed Dreams—Faces of America, a shrine containing relics of the Portuguese-American community in California. We readers cannot but feel privileged at having been let into people’s lives and their families this way. And the authors here can feel joy and pride in having, in a seamless manner captured in this collection, the very heart of Portuguese-American experience in California for the last two hundred years.

Soren Kierkegaard said, “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards,” and as tempting as it may be for a far too large number of us to ignore or deem our past unimportant, our education starts there—in the past: our understanding of ourselves starts there; our empathy for the Other starts there. And I quote poet and novelist Frank X. Gaspar in the Foreword of Untamed Dreams—Faces of America, “This is a book for the shelf in every Portuguese American home, every public library, and the homes of all those who would be pleased and edified to read of our presence.”


CALÇADA EXHIBIT AT SAN JOSE LIBRARY

If you missed the Museum exhibit on Portuguese paving stones–calçadas–, you have another chance to see the mosaic-like designs from around the Portuguese-speaking world. At San Jose’s Martin Luther King, Jr./San Jose State Library our exhibit will be on display through Tuesday, January 30. The library is at the corner of South Fourth and San Fernando Streets, open 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, 9a.m. to 6 pm. Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. You can park in the Fourth Street Garage.

Do visit this fine show!
MEET RAY GAMMA, OUR PHOTOGRAPHER

We see a bit of the activity and the mood of the annual Dia de Portugal festivals because Ray Gamma takes pictures.

This Santa Clara native, son and grandson of Madeirans who went to Hawaii in 1907, was the youngest of nine children and the first to graduate from high school. He served in the Navy Reserves for almost four years and then in the Air Force for four years (Korea). It was here that he became interested in photography, a hobby that served him well in later years.

He joined the Santa Clara Fire Department in 1955, later worked in other fire departments, and was fire marshal at Stanford University. His photography skills were vital in fire investigations. Of course, those were the days of film, before digital cameras.

Ray has been an active volunteer in many organizations, taking pictures of many events. He served on the City of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Commission which later honored him by re-naming the Reed Street dog park: Raymond G. Gamma Dog Park. How appropriate—he is a real dog lover.

Ray has been involved with the Portuguese Museum since its beginning twenty years ago. Besides taking pictures of all events, Ray helped prepare the popular exhibit “The Hawaiian Connection” which tells the story of the thousands of Portuguese who went to Hawaii (1878-1910) to work on sugar plantations and in other jobs. He is proud of his Madeiran and Hawaiian heritage and still has relatives in Hawaii. He’s taken pictures there too.

Thank you, Ray, for all the great photos. See many more on the website www.diadeportugalca.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES - INTERESTESTING AND FUN

The Portuguese Heritage Society gives Museum tours, researches exhibits, and plans Dia de Portugal events. It would be wonderful to have some new people to share in our interesting activities. You need not be of Portuguese heritage, and you don’t have to sit through lots of meetings (maybe a few). You would meet many interesting and very nice people. PLEASE, PLEASE tell us if you’re even a little bit interested. Ideally we’ll find some new board members (meetings on the second Wednesday evening of each month) or some new volunteers. Talk to us at 408-293-3053 or write us at PO Box 28148, San Jose, CA 95158 or e-mail us at info@portuguesemuseum.org.

We really can offer you interesting adventures and FUN!

MUSEUM MAKING PLANS

Inspired by exhibits he saw at the Macau Wine Museum during his 2016 visit to Macau (former Portuguese colony that is now part of China), PHSC President Antonino Pascoal is eager to bring the Portuguese Historical Museum into the era of high tech with proposals for computer-generated interactive exhibits and videos.

Over the past twenty years the Museum has presented a wide variety of exhibits ranging from Portuguese settlement in Hawaii to Christmastime nativity scenes, Portuguese fraternal organizations to mosaic-like stone pavements, folk dance groups to Portuguese participation in the 1915 San Francisco world’s fair. Some of these exhibits are still displayed in the Museum, usually in smaller spaces than the originals. There is a possibility of all past exhibits being available on the Museum’s website. They could also be available in the Museum in a theater-style setting.

Check out our website www.portuguesemuseum.org and let us know your thoughts on these proposals. We’ll keep you posted with future issues of this newsletter.
THANK YOU, DIA DE PORTUGAL SPONSORS

Each year we give thanks to those who help us stage the Dia de Portugal festival. Our “partners” give in-kind goods and services. They are History Park (a perfect festival place), Sunnyvale Volkswagen (shuttle vehicles), JB Designs (computer graphics), HGC Imports and Silva Sausage (refrigeration), Nor*Cal Portable Services (toilets), Maple Press (printing), and The Portuguese Tribune and radio stations KSQQ and KLBS (publicity).


Not to be forgotten are the Raffle Sponsors: Azores Airlines with a remarkable first prize, Adega Restaurant, and David and Vina Freitas.

And to the VOLUNTEERS: you’re the greatest! THANK YOU to everyone!