Notes From the Director

Susan Shillinglaw

I’ve been at the NSC for nearly nine months, nine crowded and challenging months. Much has gone better than I had imagined. It’s a pleasure to be working with CSUMB, and the University’s presence in the building gives everyone a lift, both psychological and physical. The NSC staff loves the building facelifts—the tile floor in the Gabilan Room has been refurbished, and tiles in the Rotunda and the Vista room replaced. Walls are painted, the roof fixed. We appreciate the collaborative spirit that the University has fostered.

Upcoming are exciting NSC events, including the annual Steinbeck Festival, May 6-8, with Steinbeck’s Home Brew Fest on Saturday, sponsored by Steinbeck Rotary. A preliminary schedule for the Festival is on page 2.

I attended my first Steinbeck Festival in 1988, shortly after I became Director of San Jose State’s Steinbeck Research Center. During that August Festival, I received a warm introduction to Salinas from John Gross, Pauline Pearson, Dick Hayman, Roger Powers, Carol Robles and many others who welcomed me in the Steinbeck fold. Twenty-eight years later, I have Roger Powers to thank for helping to make this 35th Steinbeck Festival a reality. It was he who presented me with the first large and generous sponsorship check from Perry Flicker.

The 2016 Steinbeck Festival is also supported by the Community Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation and Taylor Farms, a generous supporter of National Steinbeck Center programs. The NSC is deeply grateful.

CALENDAR

Call 831.775.4721 for more information on our upcoming events.

Sweet Thursdays at 5:30

March 17 An Irish Celebration with Taelen Thomas, actor; Amelia Krupski, harpist; and Shannon Warto, vocalist.


April 28 James B. Golden, Salinas Poet Laureate, will read from his 4th collection of poetry, “BULL: The Journey of a Freedom Icon” which addresses his father’s experiences in the Jim Crow South.

“Democracy in the Fields,” Panel with Luis Valdez and Website launch – April 3, 3-5

“Democracy in the Fields “ is a multimedia project coordinated by Miriam Pawel, Cesar Chavez biographer, that is collecting and sharing stories of farmworkers who joined Cesar Chavez’s movement forty years ago in the Salinas Valley.
The 35th Annual Steinbeck Festival takes place May 6 – 8, 2016 at the National Steinbeck Center. The theme is “From Salinas to Sea of Cortez: Steinbeck on Land and Sea,” honoring the 75th anniversary of Sea of Cortez, published in 1941. This year’s festival features 30 minute “Jon” talks followed by panel discussions.

On Saturday, the Festival features the first annual “Steinbeck's Home Brew Fest” from 12:00-4:00 along Main Street, sponsored by the Steinbeck Rotary. Beer gardens will be located at the NSC courtyard, Taylor Farms courtyard, and the old Greyhound building on Gabilan Street. At 6:00 on Friday and Saturday nights there will be a home/craft brew tasting dinner at the Steinbeck House. Friday night is a Rotary fundraiser. Saturday night is a NSC fundraiser. This is a triple play for Steinbeck in Salinas: Rotary, House, NSC!

Thursday, May 5:
Festival Kickoff

6:00: A Sweet Thursday Festival Kickoff: “Moonshine and Mash”: Stories of the Great Depression. Speakers include Betty Henshaw, author of Children of the Dust: An Okie Family Story (TexasTech UP)

Friday, May 6:
Steinbeck on Land

“Salinas had a destiny beyond other towns. The rich black land was one thing, but the high gray fog and coolish to cold weather which gave it a lousy climate created the greatest lettuce in the world, several crops a year and at a time when no other lettuce in the United States matured. The town named itself The Salad Bowl of the World…” –JS

8:30-9:30: Early risers historic walking tour, East of Eden on Main Street.
9:00: Panel: Susan Shillinglaw, “Steinbeck and the Land: Ecological Reflections.” Director of the NSC and Professor at San Jose State University.

10:15-11:00: Discussion on Steinbeck: Susan Shillinglaw and William Souder.
11:45-12:45: Historic walking tour. East of Eden on Main Street.
11:45-1:15: Taco lunch at NSC patio (included in 3-day Festival pass).
1:00: Film: Eric Palmer, “Japanese Flower Growers.” He will be joined by Ann Jordan. Eric Palmer is a local filmmaker and Ann Jordan teaches Japanese language classes at Los Gatos High School. This presentation is organized by the Salinas Valley JACL.
1:45: Jean Vengua: “U.S. Filipino Newspapers and the Juan Steinbeck Poetry Society.” Dr. Vengua is co-chair of the Asian Cultural Experience in Salinas.
3:00: Sergio Chavez, “The Occupational Careers of Ex-Braceros in the Tijuana-San Diego Borderlands.” Sergio Chavez is an Assistant Professor in Sociology at Rice University and author of Border Lives, (Oxford UP, 2016).

3:00 and 4:00: Tours of the Steinbeck House, including upstairs!

4:00: Photographs: Daniel Ruanova, The Bracero Art Project: Photographs from the Enesto Galarza Collection at Stanford.

4:00-4:45: Panel discussion on Braceros: Sergio Chavez, Ignacio Rodriguez, and Daniel Ruanova.

4:00-6:30: Sunset Red Pony Ranch tour.

5:00-6:00: Travels with Charley, documentary by Lee Mendelson and “Steinbeck Country.”

5:00-6:00: Historic walking tour, East of Eden on Main Street.

7:00: Banquet, Songs from Cannery Row and surprise evening event, TBA.

Saturday, May 7:

Steinbeck and the Sea

“Nights at anchor in the Gulf are quiet and strange. The water is smooth, almost solid, and the dew is so heavy that the decks are soaked. The little waves rasp on the shell beaches with a hissing sound, and all about in the darkness the fishes jump and splash.” –(SOC)


9:30: John Gregg, “Restoring the Western Flyer.” President of Gregg Drilling and Testing.


11:00-12:00: Panel discussion on Ed Ricketts, Citizen Science and the Western Flyer.

12:00: Tour of First Mayor’s House and Salinas Valley Railroad Museum, 26 Station Place.

12:00: Archives Tour with Lisa Josephs.

12:00-2: Purchase lunch on Main! Enjoy Steinbeck’s Home Brew Fest (see back page)

12:30: “Craft Beer 101”.

1:00: William Gilly, “Retracing Sea of Cortez, 2004.” William Gilly is a Professor of Biology at the Stanford’s Hopkins Marine Station.

10% discount for all current NSC members on three-day passes.

EVENT TICKETS:

3-day Festival pass: $75
Includes all talks and panels + continental breakfasts + taco lunch on Friday. Doors open each day at 8:15.

Single day ticket: $30

Red Pony Ranch Sunset tour: $50 (bus to ranch)

Ag Tour: $50 (bus to fields)

Ricketts’s Lab Tour: $25 (meet at Lab on Cannery Row)

All Walking Tours: $10 (meet in front of NSC)

Steinbeck House Fundraising dinner for NSC, Craft Beer Banquet: $100

Steinbeck’s Home Brew Fest on Saturday: $35, Advance; $50, day of (For three-day Festival pass holders, $15 for Steinbeck beer garden only).

10% discount for all current NSC members on three-day passes.

TO ORDER TICKETS

Online: Eventbrite (link below)

Mail: Xerox this page, circle choices, and send a check to:
National Steinbeck Center
Attn: Austin Sanchez-Moran
One Main Street, Salinas, CA 93901

Phone: Steinbeck Store: 831.775.4721

Please reserve a hotel room by April 15.
Rooms are being held at:

Holiday Inn Express
195 Kern St., Salinas, CA 93901
831.737.1180

Reserve by April 15 for a rate of $99 per night (+taxes) for either a standard king or standard 2 queens.

(Mention “Steinbeck Festival ’16” for discounted rates.)

Conference guests can upgrade to king suite for an additional $10, a 2 queen suite for an additional $20.

Purchase tickets online: www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-steinbeck-festival-tickets-21531711930
When fans email me Steinbeck-related questions, the questions are in-depth, and often demand complicated answers. For example, a woman in Australia contacted me about the order of publication of Steinbeck’s works. Her project is to blog her experience of reading the Steinbeck canon from start to finish. In answering her question, I asked her to consider what she meant by “start to finish.” Since some of Steinbeck’s works were published serially or in magazines (“Once There Was a War,” for example; or the Vietnam dispatches; or “The Pearl”), she might choose to read them in their earliest appearance or in the final published formats. This question was fun for me to answer because it challenged me to consider how information influences choices and ways of thinking. In the end, she had to choose what kind of reading experience most suited her and the reason for her project.

Another person asked about Steinbeck’s cap because she wanted to find an exact replica to give to a Steinbeck fan. In the first chapter of “Travels with Charley,” Steinbeck describes his beloved cap: “My cap was one I have worn for many years, a blue serge British naval cap with a short visor and on its peak the royal lion and unicorn, as always fighting for the crown of England.” From this description and a fuzzy photo provided by the woman, I searched for references to World War II British Navy uniform standards and medals. A few days later, in a stroke of good luck, I found a clear, forward facing photo of the hat, hidden in a collage of images in our own Arts and Culture Gallery, a section of our main exhibit hall. I sent all of these resources and links back to the woman who asked. A few weeks later, I was rewarded with an email of thanks and a side-by-side photo of the happy recipient wearing his new treasure and the original photo of John.

I have also answered questions about the locations of manuscripts for “East of Eden”—at the Henry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in Austin—and “The Grapes of Wrath”—at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. Two fans were so moved by these books that they were planning tattoos of inspiring quotations. And they wanted these lines tattooed in Steinbeck’s handwriting.

“And all of them were caught in something larger than themselves.”

“The Grapes of Wrath

In early January, the National Steinbeck Center held a Free Week for Monterey County residents, offering extra programming to encourage county residents and visitors alike to make a stop in our museum. Susan Shillinglaw and I showed unique artifacts to over thirty visitors. To show Steinbeck’s cramped hand, Susan opened the WWII notebook that Steinbeck kept. The simple brown spiral notebook contains dozens of articles, a few which are unpublished. I set up an arrangement of “Sweet Thursday” items: Chapter 19 from the manuscript, with printed copies of the final text for visitors to compare the two. I also included photographs relating to the manuscript, including photos of Steinbeck in the early 1950s when he was writing it, the Sag Harbor house where he did most of the writing, and the stage from a local production in the late 1980s of the musical “Pipe Dream,” by Rogers and Hammerstein, which is based on the story of “Sweet Thursday.”

Visitors lingered with Susan and me, asking questions about Steinbeck and sharing the stories that they have heard about him. Archives Day encapsulated what is most enjoyable about talking with fans: the sharing and mutual love of Steinbeck’s work, interest in learning, and an all too brief, but special, comradery that can come out of engaged, enthusiastic conversation.
Susan Shillinglaw, Director

In an email he sent me after December’s Salinas Valley Comic Con, Joe Truskot, Features Editor for The Salinas Californian, wrote: “It was fun to see folks having a good time at the Steinbeck Center. Last Monday, when asked by the editor how Comic Con went, I got to bring up the point that for many locals and others, coming to an event like that at the Center is a big thing to them. I chatted with two young men from San Lucas who came up to the Center and were bubbling about the items in the grab bags they just purchased. I also enjoyed watching the dynamics between parents and their kids (and I don’t mean toddlers). And young couples attending together. All very good things to happen in Salinas. Congratulations to you and our staff. It was a terrific event.”

Joe is right—the Salinas Valley Comic Con was a lively, engaging, happy event. Children attended. Blue-winged fairies attended, flying west from the Central Valley. Storm troopers marched in and out. Darth Vader breathed heavily while children (include me in that mix) clamored for a photo. Booths selling comics and metal monsters (where is a squid? I wondered) and posters and Chunky Girl comics (a favorite) were set up all around the Center, and several other stations were at the John Steinbeck Library, a few blocks away, where children created their own comics.

The National Steinbeck Center and the Salinas Public Library teamed up for this hugely successful event that underscored, we trust, the importance of literacy as well as the diversity of literary texts.

Chunky Girl comics was a big hit, as three confident women spoke about body image and heroism during a Saturday panel. Latino Comics USA was wildly popular, with founder Ricardo Padilla speaking about “New Directions in Comic Con Art” at the NSC kick off panel on Friday afternoon and on a Saturday panel at the John Steinbeck Library. On Friday afternoon, he was joined by David Mesher, Professor of English at San Jose State University, who discussed “Illustrated Texts and Graphic Novels” and Luis Manzo of the Salinas Public Library who spoke about “How Graphic Novels Teach History.” Over 80 attended the opening kickoff, which was a sign of good things to come for the next two days.

Personally, meeting SpongeBob SquarePants’s head writer Steven Banks was a delight. I bought his books for holiday gifts. A Comic Con newby, I was a convert to this energetic gathering of festive fans and friendly panelists.

Luckily for the NSC, John Steinbeck loved popular culture and comics in particular. Writing about Al Capp, he said, “Comic strips might be the real literature of our time.”

We think Steinbeck might be onto something, then and now. NSC organizer Jesse Banda as well as the John Steinbeck Library staff (particularly Kris Amaral, Luis Manzo, and Eric Howard) are to be applauded for Comic Con’s impact on the community. Once again, Marci Bracco provided the NSC with terrific publicity for the event. And even though Jesse Banda has resigned his position at the NSC, the NSC staff is ready to plunge into organizing the third Salinas Valley Comic Con in December 2016, co-sponsored by the Salinas Public Library and, we hope others. Suggestions? Please write Lisa at archives@steinbeck.org. As she reminds me, she’s a Con fanatic.

May the force be with us.
Volunteer Update
Diane Arellano, Volunteer Coordinator

Congratulations to our Volunteers of the Year for 2015, Marvin and Karla Wolf. The Wolfs are part of the original group of docents who opened the Center in 1998. Their warm and infectious smiles greet our guests, and their passion for John Steinbeck provides visitors with great conversations about the writer. They both enjoy getting the chance to meet people from other states and countries. As a retired Assistant Public Works Director for Monterey County, Marvin provides information on the area’s agricultural landscape: “I talk about the aquifers and the water issues the farmers face and since my grandparents lived here, I can talk about Old Salinas and how things were when John was living here.” Karla keeps busy walking through the exhibits to make sure people are seeing all the gems of the museum: “I especially like when we have teachers from other countries using Steinbeck books in their classroom. I didn’t realize how world renowned John is until I started volunteering here. We are doing something that is a lot of fun.”

Marvin and Karla, you have our utmost appreciation. Thank you for being wonderful ambassadors for the National Steinbeck Center.

In 2015 our volunteers donated 3877 hours to the Center. According to the website Independent Sector, the value of their time calculates to $89,442.39 (national average of a volunteer hour is $23.09).

We have many opportunities to volunteer and are adding more. In March we will begin training volunteers to give walking tours of Oldtown Salinas. The first session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29th at 3pm. Volunteers can gain retail experience by working as a cashier at the Admissions Desk, or work with Lisa in the archives on a variety of projects. NSC volunteers interact with guests from around the world by being greeters and help area students as writing coaches at our Steinbeck Young Authors Day of Writing in March.

For more information on how you can become a volunteer, contact Diane Arellano at 831.796.3833 or diane@steinbeck.org.

The California Council for the Humanities comes to Salinas Saturday, August 27
Susan Shillinglaw

This year is a banner year for milestones. It’s the 40th anniversary of the California Council for the Humanities, the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the 75th for Sea of Cortez, and the 100th for the Pulitzer Prize. As the CCH initiative, “On the Road in California” notes, “The Pulitzer Prize Board has partnered with the Federation of State Humanities Councils to create the Pulitzer Prize Centennial Campfires initiative to commemorate their milestone and ‘to launch their second century in ways that deepen and inspire the public’s engagement with and understanding of the value of great literature, history, music, drama, and journalism.’”

Each forum in California includes a Pulitzer Prize winner or finalist.

In August, the Pulitzer Prize Campfire is coming to the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, and the subject will be “California Water: Rivers, Oceans and Our Future.” Details forthcoming.

West Bloomfield High School Literary Garden: An Update

The mattress vine at the Pacific Grove cottage stubbornly refused to pop up this year—construction seems to have eradicated the vine that Steinbeck planted on the side of the cottage. To replace the cutting from the vine promised to Jennifer McQuillan’s literary garden (see October NEWS), Virginia St. Jean and I dug up a calla lily, a naked lady (might John be pleased with that choice?), and an unknown succulent next to the barbeque that John and his father built in 1930. These plants from Steinbeck’s garden are now—belatedly—planted in Jennifer McQuillen’s literary garden.

For further updates, see her blog: waldenatwestbloomfield.blogspot.com/2016/02/counting-down-to-spring.html?m=1
“... all things are one thing and that one thing is all things—plankton, a shimmering phosphorescence on the sea and the spinning planets and an expanding universe, all bound together by the elastic string of time.” — (SOC)

Steinbeck’s words are newly relevant. Wood from the Steinbeck family’s Pacific Grove cottage, which is currently being restored, has been repurposed to make surfboards.

John Steinbeck’s father had the 3-room summer cottage in Pacific Grove built in 1903, and throughout John’s childhood the Steinbeck family frequently spent weekends at the house. When John married Carol Henning in 1930, his parents allowed the newlyweds to live in the cottage rent-free so that he could pursue his writing career: “Financially we are in a mess, but ‘spiritually’ we ride the clouds,” Steinbeck wrote shortly after their move to the cottage. Steinbeck lived there until 1936. In 1948, John returned to the cottage after separating from his second wife, Gwyn. Even after a 1950 move to New York City, where he would live for the rest of his life, the Pacific Grove cottage remained a touchstone: “I long for it with almost a pain sometimes,” he wrote to his sister Mary in 1955. “...it has a pull almost irresistible. I have never slept in my life as I can sleep there.”

The boards he and his family trod for nearly a century (his sister Beth lived in the house until the early 1990s) will soon ride the waves.

Ventana Surfboards and Supplies, an online surf shop and wholesaler based out of Santa Cruz, came across the wood when they were approached by René Gaudette, an employee of Houston Home Improvement & Repair—the company restoring Steinbeck’s 11th Street Cottage. Gaudette had heard Ventana Surfboards co-owner David Dennis speak at a panel on sustainable business practices and was impressed by the company’s commitment to environmental responsibility. “I mentioned our ‘Upcycle Partner Program’ and how we’re turning ‘trash’ from local companies into surfboards and surf supplies,” Dennis recalls. Gaudette offered Ventana Surfboards redwood boards removed from the cottage’s foundation and bathroom.

And now people can ride the waves on surfboards made out of the wood once beneath the Steinbeck family feet. So far the wood has been incorporated into three items: the Cannery Row 6’ Hull, the Cannery Row Fish Handplane and the Cooperage Luthier 7’ Disc Surfboard. Ventana Surfboards is also open to creating custom boards and bodysurfing handplanes with the wood.

“We don’t believe that Steinbeck ever surfed, but he loved the Monterey Bay and spent several years here. His novels helped draw attention to the area and paved the way for its conservation. We think he’d be pleased with our use of the wood from his home,” states co-owner Martijin Stiphout.

Ten percent of the proceeds of the sale of the boards will be donated to the National Steinbeck Center. For more information, please visit ventanasupplies.com.
At Soledad Prison
Jim Micheletti, Guest Contributor

“At Soledad Prison
Jim Micheletti, Guest Contributor

“I hope I never see you again.” There is a context where this cruel statement can be kind.

Inmates serving life sentences at the Soledad State Prison say this to other inmates serving lesser sentences. The idea is simple: “Don’t get arrested again. Once out, stay out of the system. Let me live some hope through you because of what I cannot do. I hope I never see you again.” Then there is a handshake, a chest bump, and the eye contact of goodbye for good.

In the United States of America, some 2.2 million of us are divided off into prison. Currently, some 67% of all inmates released return to prison. It costs, on the low end, some 60 thousand dollars a year to lock up a human being. Our need for education over incarceration is paramount.

The National Steinbeck Center and Palma School have partnered with the LIFE Cycle Team at Soledad Correctional for a combined study of The Grapes of Wrath. Benefactors close to Palma donated funds to purchase 60 copies of the book from the Steinbeck Center for inmates to read, highlight, and annotate.

Small and large groups discuss themes mattering most: solidarity, mentoring, the family “unbroke,” perseverance, and the triumph of the human spirit. There are five sessions on Friday evenings from January to March. For Palma, this is a second step. Last year the school’s Action Leadership created a publication called “Brokenness and Blessings” about the importance of father-son relationships, reflections penned by inmates and Palma students. Printed side by side, these writings revealed both the pain and the promise of the father who wasn’t and the father who was.

The Grapes of Wrath opens with Tom Joad paroled from McAlester State Prison in Oklahoma. He violates his parole to accompany his family on the long haul to California, the Promised Land. Grapes is proving to be a powerful novel for inmates at Soledad Prison, many of whom are seeking parole, direction and connection outside. Soledad Prison sits along the highway near the town of Soledad (“solitude”). It is near the heart of Steinbeck country and Steinbeck’s conscience. (Soledad serves as the setting of, Of Mice and Men, proving again that in about this experience. They hope to create another publication about responses to Grapes: mentoring, displacement, family. Inmates who are pensive while serving slow time prove witty and creative with their words. With the drought in mind and the Okies’ subsequent exodus, one inmate spoke about his own drought with drugs and his own exodus to sobriety.

“T was a hopeless dope fiend. Now I am a dope-less hope fiend!” Another inmate, hand over heart at the podium, talked about how the murder he committed put the victim’s mother and father in an “emotional drought” for their entire life journey. Near the end of one session, one inmate described Ma Joad, an inmate favorite character: “Ma gets her strength from giving her strength.” Another said that the turtle was significant: “It had to stick its neck out to go forward.”

Friday evenings with Grapes end with strength given and received. The inmates form a long line and each of the 20 plus visitors shake hands and exchange gratitude for the respectful exchange of ideas. Many can be heard saying, “I hope I see you again.”

Of Mice and Men is likely to be the next book shared. Those interested in participating in this unique literary partnership should contact Jim Micheletti, Minister, Palma School micheletti@palmaschool.org or Mia Mirassou mirassou@palmaschool.org at Palma School.

NOTE: Jim Micheletti is the director of campus ministry at Palma School in Salinas, CA.
Coaching Young Writers

Julie Minnis, Literary Consultant

The Steinbeck Young Authors Program celebrates its 13th year with over 4000 students participating in Monterey County schools and nearly 130 student finalists anticipated at the NCS for the Day of Writing, March 7, 2016. One highlight of the day, as always, is the overwhelming response from community volunteers from various occupational fields who come to coach students in their writing. They bring their communication skills and share life experiences while coaching a student on ways to strengthen his/her essay about an aspect of John Steinbeck’s The Red Pony.

Coaches are at the heart of the experience for students during the Day of Writing, and for many middle school students it is the first time they have had one-on-one coaching about their writing. Following picture-taking, lunch, and coach time for discussion and revision of the student’s draft, each finalist spends a final hour independently working on a final draft that will be submitted for review by several judges.

An awards ceremony on April 16, 2016, celebrates student winners from each grade level and across several writing categories: the Jody Award, the Gabilan Award, and the Billy Buck Award. Memorable moments occur during the awards ceremony as student winners are announced. Many coaches have been observed offering a congratulation card to their students, a writing pen, a small box of chocolates, or a book. In one instance, a coach gave his Stanford undergraduate cap and gown to a student in order to encourage the student’s continued efforts in writing. Many coaches return year-after-year to work with young writers and continue to follow the educational progress of their students.

When asked what coaches liked best about their experience, the evaluations noted “that my student was very focused, the essay well organized.” Another coach stated her student “used her ‘musical ear’ and training to write phrasing and was sensitive to drawing from her own personal experience.” Students thrive. Former student winner, Jordan Bell, commented “the SYA program gave me one of my first bits of confidence to be a writer.”

“It was the first time I wrote something that was not a school assignment. At home, I had never seen adults write for pleasure. So seeing these adults [the coaches] take time from their work day and have passion for writing was eye opening for me.” —Eric Mora, reflecting on his participation in the Day of Writing, 2004.

BOOKSTORE

New Postcards! We’re now carrying lovely postcards by Laura Romero as well as poppy mugs created by Gavilan College Ceramics instructor Jane Rekedal. For the upcoming Steinbeck Festival, “From Salinas to Sea of Cortez: Steinbeck on Land and Sea” we’ll have more of Jane’s lovely pottery.

Ricketts And to honor the 75th anniversary of Sea of Cortez, the bookstore is featuring Ricketts’s-related texts, including copies of The Western Flyer: Steinbeck’s Boat, the Sea of Cortez, and the Saga of Pacific Fisheries by Kevin Bailey (U of Chicago P, 2015) and the recently published Ed Ricketts from Cannery Row to Sitka, Alaska: Science, History, and Reflections Along the Pacific Coast (Shorefast Editions, 2015). The latter edition is signed by contributors, including Nancy Ricketts, Ed’s daughter.

Rare Books Also new is the “Collector’s Corner,” featuring first editions of Steinbeck’s work, as well as several secondary texts on Steinbeck.

Visit the NSC bookstore! We welcome suggestions about items to stock, books as well as local artists.
In 1979 the United States Postal Service (USPS) launched the Literary Arts Series of stamps honoring American authors, poets and playwrights. From over 1,500 suggestions to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee, USPS selected John Steinbeck to be honored on a postage stamp as the first American writer in its new (annual) Series, which continues today. Over 150 million of these 15-cent dark-blue commemorative stamps (Scott #1773) were printed.

The stamp was issued in Salinas, California, the author’s birthplace, on February 27, 1979, the 77th anniversary of his birth. According to the USPS, “These skillful wordsmiths spun our favorite tales—and American history along with them.” The photo of Steinbeck featured on the stamp was taken in the 1940s by Philippe Halsman (1906–79). His portrait photographs of Albert Einstein and Adlai Stevenson also appear on U.S. postage stamps.

Thanks to the generous donation from Martin L. Severe of North Bethesda, Maryland, NSC has received a lovely collection of about 50 different Steinbeck First Day Covers (FDCs) that will go on display at the Center in the new year. These envelopes (covers) include some scarce “first” cachets, hand-painted items, and items from many seldom seen cachet makers. These highly-collectible philatelic items are rich in artistic, educational, and historic value.

FDCs are usually standard envelopes bearing the newly issued postage stamp with a special “First Day of Issue” cancellation (postmark) on the day that stamp is officially authorized for use. Most have a cachet (pronounced ka-shay), which is the design added to the cover. The cachet can include creative artwork, photos, text, and often tells an interesting story—perhaps something factual, special, or exciting about the stamp or about the stamp’s honoree.

About the donor: Marty began collecting FDCs in the 1960’s at the of fifteen. He quickly became enamored with their rich artistic, cultural, educational, geographic, and historic beauty and became hopelessly “hooked!” To this day, he remains feverishly passionate about the hobby, enjoys finding good homes for his treasures, and helps spark an interest in collecting among our nation’s youth, senior, and culturally diverse populations. He is a member in good standing of the American First Day Cover Society and the American Philatelic Society.

BECOME A MEMBER!

As a member, you will enjoy numerous benefits, including special invitations to member-exclusive events; discounts on the Center’s programs, exhibition openings and museum store; subscription to the Center’s e-NEWS blasts and much more.

Call 831.775.4729 or visit www.steinbeck.org
2016 Steinbeck Festival MAY 6th-8th
PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE, CONTINUED

2:00: Harold Augenbraum: “Translating Culture: Mexican America and Steinbeck’s Pearl.” Harold Augenbraum co-directed the 2002 Steinbeck Centennial; he just finished a twelve-year tenure as Executive Director of the National Book Foundation, presenter of the National Book Awards. In the fall of this year, he will be a Visiting Fellow at Yale University.

3:00: David Dennis, “Surfboards from 11th Street, PG floorboards.” Complete with props and surfboards, David Dennis, co-founder of Ventana Surfboards & Supplies, will be discussing the intersection of the Steinbeck Pacific Grove cottage, local history, sustainable business, and surfing.

4:00: Historic walking tour. West of Main Street and First Mayor’s House with Carol Robles.

4:00: Archives Tour with Lisa Josephs.

6:00: Fund raising Beer Fest dinner at the Steinbeck House benefitting the NSC, limited seating for 50.

“I am a water fiend... Water is everything to me.”
—(JS, 1948 notebook)

Sunday, May 8: Crossing Boundaries: Teaching/Considering Steinbeck Across Disciplines

8:30-1:30: Ag Tour, Vearl Gish. Meet in front of Steinbeck Center at 8:15.


11:30-12:15: Pete Barraza, “Teaching Jazz and Cannery Row.” Pete Barraza teaches English at Santa Monica High School and was founder of their California Literature class.

12:15-1:00: “Mothers and children in Japanese Internment.” Brown bag discussion.

1:00-1:30: Sharing curriculum on the NSC website.

2:00-4:00: Tours of Ricketts’s Lab. (Meet at the Lab on Cannery Row for one-hour tours at 2:00 or 3:00.)


National Steinbeck Center Building Sold to CSUMB
David Butler, Director of Finance

As you may have heard, CSUMB purchased the National Steinbeck Center building last September to operate a satellite campus in Salinas. This was a sale lease back in which the National Steinbeck Center is leasing back 45% of the building which houses the museum, bookstore, orientation theatre, archives and staff offices. The remaining 55% is open space used for classrooms and community meetings. Unfortunately we lost the Gabilan Room which was used for temporary exhibits by students. However, we gained a great partner and landlord in CSUMB, who is now responsible for maintaining the building.

Although the building is 18 years old and in generally good shape, meeting all code requirements, CSUMB is required to bring the building up to new owner coding. CSUMB will be doing that over the next few months. First on CSUMB’s list was a major inspection and repair of the roof just in time for our new rainy season. Over the next few months CSUMB will be repairing and replacing as needed to bring the building up to university standards. The tile floor in the Vista Room was uncovered and restored most recently.

CSUMB is currently using space for meetings and on site staff and has scheduled three of their Spring OLLI programs here at the National Steinbeck Center. We expect there will be some change in the building signage to reflect new ownership and their presence.
STEINBECK'S HOME Brew Fest

SATURDAY, MAY 7
12:00–4:00

DOWNTOWN SALINAS. BOOThS ANd FOOD.
BEER GARDENS AT TAYLOR FARMS COURTYARD, NATIONAL STEINBECK CENTER COURTYARD, AND THE OLD GREYHOUND BUILDING ON GABILAN STREET.

Contact
NATIONAL STEINBECK CENTER
831.775.4721

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John Steinbeck Highway Signs installed
Thanks to Assemblymember Luis Alejo for sponsoring this sign and honoring Steinbeck!