

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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Time Capsules

Therese A. Muranaka

Archeologist

San Diego Coast District

Archaeologists often come across time capsules, which are collections of artifacts found together. If they find one arrow point laying on a trail, it is interesting as leftover evidence. If they find multiple objects grouped together like a time capsule, it is even better, telling a more complete story.

When archaeologists speak to the public, they ask people to leave artifacts in place, they are clues as if working with Sherlock Holmes on a crime scene. These grouped artifacts are called a 'feature' and much more can be learned from them together in situ.

Today, the Cosmopolitan Hotel archaeologists are looking to create a modern feature, a modern time capsule, to put in the ground to mark the interesting time they spent

working on the project. At a meeting of the Old Town 'Volunteers In Parks' group a few Saturdays ago, I asked them to write notes to the future, notes that would be buried in Cosmopolitan's capsule. The topic at that meeting was "Talking to the Future; Listening to the Past", and each person spoke to the future. We are now looking for a good container which will seal, and not rust or leak water into the messages.

Looking at some of the more famous time capsules in San Diego Coast District State Parks, we note the First San Diego Courthouse capsule, placed in Old Town in 1992, and recorded with the International Time Capsule Society at Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia, and with the British Museum. It will be officially opened in 2050. We also note the July 24th, 1851 San Diego Herald which says a time capsule containing documents signed by the original Mexican and U.S. commissioners was buried at the boundary line at Monument Mesa in what is now Border

Field State Park. No one today knows what kind of container it was, or if it is still there. Another copper pipe time capsule was placed during the 1894 remodel, which no one has seen again either.

The Casa de Bandini/ Cosmopolitan Hotel restoration/ rehabilitation is an event worth commemorating with a time capsule. If you would like to 'talk to the future', bring a small (4 x 4 inches or less) note of an appropriate nature to the State Historic Park's Robinson-Rose House Visitor Center front desk. Please mark it "Cosmopolitan Hotel Time Capsule". This should be done by April 30, 2009. It will be placed in a non-scientific location so that more digging disturbance will not take place, and it will be recorded with a global positioning system. Perhaps it will go in a plumbing trench or under a new cement walkway. Opportunities to talk to the future are rare, and unlike the First San Diego Courthouse time capsule, this one has no projected time to be opened.

