

## 2023 Community Functions Annual Report

The Law is often referred to as a “seamless web.” Everyone these days spends way too much over our time “surfing the web.” So too is our work and the events held each calendar year at the UPSES Hall. As UPSES Directors, we serve on many committees all working together with common goals: preservation of our Portuguese culture and traditions; service to our community; and the continued well-being and growth of our United Portuguese S.E.S. Hall.

Before we begin, I would like to thank not only each member of my Community Functions committee, but the entire UPSES board for their hard work, commitment and service to this Hall and our entire community. It has been my honor to serve with you for this second of five years terms. While I may be terming out of my board seat – I’m not quite ready for full retirement yet.

All too often, most of our attention remains rightly focused on our UPSES Festa do Espirito Santo and its fund raisers, but much more than *just* the Festa happens at the Hall each year. Here is a brief recap of some of the community functions and community services provided at the UPSES Hall in 2023:

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, our Honorary Vice- Consul, Exmo, Sr. Idalmiro DaRosa, the Aliança Açoreana, and the United Portuguese SES inc. joined to co-host a dinner symposium for club presidents and community leaders presented by Paulo Manuel João Alfonso, Assoc. Prof. of Physic & Astronomy at River College in Sacramento, CA. Prof. Alfonso is the author of “The double nationality of João Rodrigues Cabrilho – Portuguese-born, naturalized Castilian – Part 1 – A much needed review.”

The UPSES also donated the venue for Consular Services during two days sessions (Thurs/Fri) in the months of January, May and September, 2023. As a direct of result of these efforts, over 300 members of our local San Diego community were able to receive much needed services without extended travel, and the Portuguese Hall of Artesia was inspired by our success to establish a permanent office at its Hall for their Honorary Vice- Consul. Our sincere thanks to Honorary Vice-Consul Idalmiro Da Rosa for his continued efforts and service.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, our UPSES Hall celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at our “Diamonds and Pearls” gala hosted by Honorary Chairs Kenny Alameida and John Rebelo, with our own Barbara Hosaka presiding as Mistress of ceremonies. Over 150 members gathered to commemorate over 75 years of cherished memories and service to our San Diego Portuguese community by the United Portuguese SES Hall, and to recognize those who have gone before us. Highlights of the evening included the unveiling of “Azulejo”, our new exterior Mural funded by the Point Loma Association. Guest speakers included Mayor Todd Gloria, Honorary Consulate Idalmiro da Rosa, and our own UPSES President Daniel Silva, with presentations from John Bento of PALCUS & Adam Nicolai of the Point Loma Association. Extra special thanks to Gala Chairs: Therese Garces and Andrea De Luz. The gala was, simply put, a magnificent evening.

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, our Community Functions committee was primarily responsible for our Dia de Portugal 2023 cultural exhibition held at the UPSES Hall. *Aliança Açoreana, Festa do Santo Amaro, Inc., Luso American, PFSA, Portuguese Historical Center, Sociedade de Nossa Sra de Fatima* and the *UPSES Inc* joined for a wonderful afternoon of food, history, heritage, and education. Thanks to Michelle Freitas Eskra who entertained our kids with activities and prizes during the exhibit. Thanks to everyone who contributed their time, talents, and personal treasures to exhibit this year. Special thanks to Teri Simas and Da Rosa, Silva, Machado, Santos, Rodrigues, and Varley families for their special contributions to this exhibition, and to the various organizations

who participated. With the limited time we had to put this function together, it was impressive to say the least. This type of exhibition has not been attempted since the *Centennial Festa* itself, and really does bring our community together.

This year was a particularly auspicious occasion. Andrew C. Silva, Protocol Manager for Mayor Todd Gloria presented a Mayoral Declaration of June 2023 as Portuguese Heritage Month in the City of San Diego and accepted a Declaration of Friendship City Status between Porto and San Diego from PALCUS. Ms. Linette DaRosa provided a brilliant summation of PALCUS and the Sister City project which will formally be declared in 2024. Ms. Zeca Rodrigues presented a delightful overview of *the Portuguese in San Diego*. Thanks also to Fatima Estrela for her *Lusidades* rendition.

The afternoon culminated in the introduction of João Pombingho and *Team Iron Pidgeon*, the first Portuguese bicyclist to enter the Race Across America (RAAM) –which began in Oceanside, CA on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and ended on June 18<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C. We are proud to announce that João and *Team Iron Pidgeon* successfully completed this roughly 3,000-mile ironman cyclist event and that our event raised \$2,000 which the United Portugues SES contributed to Team Iron Pidgeon's expenses and support. ***Força Portugal!***

A little reminder to my successor, the 2024 Dia de Portugal will also be an independent event with hopefully the formal Declaration of Formal Porto/San Diego Sister City Status. I would like to extend my continued support to whatever type of event the future board chooses to hold.

In August, the UPSES hosted the Bruno Mars salute at *the Concert in the Park* providing tacos, quesadillas and linguica sandwiches to the over 3500 people in attendance and promoting our Hall.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Festa de Lapa filled our parking lot with a large crowd again, chaired by Therese Garces, Yvonne Siragusa and the members of the Bar committee. Over 85 lbs. of Lapas were prepared that day; and for the first time the event sold out. Special thanks to the volunteers who devoted their time and talents-- fishing, cooking, serving and, of course, cleaning up-- to make this event happen each year. Entertainment was provided by our own local band, *Roseville*.

Over the Christmas holidays, we ended 2023 with the *Romarias*, the annual community events specifically designated to give back to our St Agnes Church, and for some time included under the auspices of the UPSES, Inc. This years *Romarias* and the *Barca* auction donated \$15,800.00 directly to St. Agnes for use in kitchen renovation of the church hall.

We are also pleased to announce that on February 24, 2024, the *Portuguese Kids* will bringing their comedic talents back to our United Portuguese S.E.S. Hall. The bar and kitchen will be selling food and drinks throughout the night. Doors open at 6:30, show starts at 8PM. Tickets are \$25. For tickets or information, go to the Portuguese Kids website, or contact the UPSES office direct. Promised to be a fun event.

Again, it has been my honor to serve as 2023 Community Functions chair. Thanks to each member of my committee (especially with the personal whirlwind our faily experienced is past year), to the UPSES board, and to the tireless efforts of the many volunteers that make our Hall happen. Congratulations to Ted & Cici Drummond on a beautiful 2023 UPSES Festa do Espirito Santo, and the best of wishes for a successful, wonderous 2024 Festa to Brennan & Bridgette Schoeffel. You have our complete and total support. God bless you all throughout 2024!