A Reader Writes: Losing Calexico’s treasures
By MARGARITA DE NECOCHEA
Saturday, June 26, 2010 12:57 AM PDT

I read in the Imperial Valley Press May 21 about our beautiful T.C. Worthy building being demolished. It read part of the building would be demolished. I went downtown and was horrified to see our beautiful T.C. Worthy building on Second and Rockwood being completely demolished. You cannot imagine the sadness I felt to see a building that was a very early 1900s (1905) icon of Calexico going down.

That beautiful building was so much a history of Calexico as was the name T.C. Worthy at one time it housed the A&P Grocery Store (Atlantic & Pacific). So many of our Calexican citizens worked there.

It was a huge building very much the same as the Garcia (formerly Dool building) on the corner of Heffernan and Second.

I do not know the cost it took to have it demolished or what it would have cost to repair it but I’m sure the Worthy family gave it a lot of thought. I am now hoping that we do not lose the Melrose building. It sits in the center of Second Street and was once the Rialto Theatre, where we first saw our silent movies. I remember one was “Wings.”

Many here in Calexico, including myself, thought that the Fox and Aztec and Rialto were the only theaters in Calexico, but in conversations with “older old-timers” I learned that the first theater had been one called Majestic Theatre, whose building still exists and is on Third and Paulin next to Do-Nut Shop and in front of a public bus stop. It is a very interesting building made out of bricks and actually quite different and beautiful.

I can see where it was a theater before. We of course also had an outdoor theater that was next to our Calexico plunge (swimming pool). This was on Third Street and Heffernan. We watched movies while we swam. We are losing so much of our “old downtown” — even our memories are fading and being lost with age.

I like to reminisce about Kressies, Woolworth’s, Bill Williams Service Station, International Drug Store (later Rollie’s Shoe Store) the Greek Restaurant (Capital Sweets). ... I like to mention them every now and then because readers who are old-timers like me like to relive those memories and hate to see them go. Sitting with some not-so-old Calexicans at the beautiful graduating ceremony of our SDSU-IV graduates, I was hearing remarks of how they had attended grade school in the “old high school” that had sat on the same campus.

The very early 1900s old buildings on the north and south side remain — also of course our beautiful Rodney Auditorium (1926), which has been beautifully remodeled inside.

Fortunately our very, very beautiful university now occupies all of those campus grounds. Time flies doesn’t it?

I can understand old buildings being demolished because of earthquake damage or fires, etc., and it is a sad thing to see them go.

So to put a happy face on the situation let’s hope Calexico revitalizes our downtown into a “beautiful new fresh look,” fresh and clean like the remodeled building on Second and Paulin. Contractor Nena Torres is doing a beautiful job with it, colors, etc.

Our city needs a plan to do it and Mark Vasquez in the Planning Department could draw one up. Otherwise it will all go helter skelter. There should be an ordinance on color of buildings, pillars, overhangs, etc. I hope
to live to see “the new fresh look” — only then will my sorrow of losing our old buildings go away.

I would also say to the young ones be active in city matters. Your voices need to be heard — not only do we need a new downtown, we also need for the youth a Boys and Girls Club as El Centro and Brawley have. This could be in the armory building with a swimming pool on the right side, on the left a basketball court — on the back of the building a boxing ring — with the large park in front many youthful events can be held.

Well, I can dream all of it, but our young voices can demand it. So, sadly we bury some of our history’s past and look forward to a new future in Calexico.

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