



LOS MEGANOS

Newsletter of East Contra Costa Historical Society

Volume 22, Issue 2

June, 2022

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from the Breakers

Revitalized Byer-Nail House Welcomes Visitors!

Open Saturdays & third Sunday thru October 2:00-4:00



Paul Krey & Tim Karlberg
Our Window Restorers

A flurry of activity inside the Byer-Nail House has been seen over the past 6 months as the paned windows were restored, walls, floors, ceilings were cleaned, closets and drawers emptied and inventoried, and displays redone to 'Tell a Story' about life in early East Contra Costa County.



Special Thank You to the **Cleaning Crew** who dedicated many hours over 3 months to deep clean the Byer Nail House and to organize new displays:

Sheila Sparacino	Sharon Johnson	Gretchen Tovar	Christine Lerch	Doreen Forlow
Kathy Griggs	Mary Black	Linda Mitchell	RoseAnn Yanes	Bev Dagneau

To **our Helpers** who came on special cleaning days: (*I'm sorry I did not catch all of the names!*)

Pauletta Weder	Lynn Machado	Cheryl Allegro	Jo Tennant	Linda Miller
Tony Allegro & grandson David		Brentwood Lions Club		

To the **Husband's Moving Crew** who came on Wednesday mornings to move items up and down stairs and in and out of the house: Joe Tovar Jerry Black

Keep up with ECCHS online

www.eastcontracostahistory.org

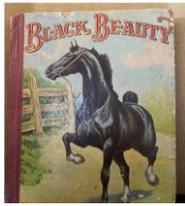
Resource Center Treasures

As a result of the recent renovation of the Byer/Nail Farm House a huge influx of items has flowed into the Resource Center for processing and storage. Among the volume of items has been an overwhelming, treasure of books that has emerged from hiding places throughout the house.

What we quickly learned was that the families who lived in our area in earlier times were well educated and well read. Over 350 books have been processed and have provided us a glimpse into the importance of books in earlier times to entertain, to inform and to instruct.

Dozens of educational books belonging to Zelma Sedge from the 1880s to 1910s were discovered, including “The First Book In English” 1894 and “Young Folk’s Library of Choice Literature - Longfellow” c. 1887.

A copy of the 1904 novel “Beverly of Graustark” owned by local pioneer Olive Barkley who also enjoyed the 1896 edition of “Poetical Quotations” Then there is the somewhat racy 1942 novel “The Invisible Scarlet O’Neil”.



Many wonderful children’s books have been uncovered and put on display. Robert Fletcher’s 1914 “Motor Boat Boys River Chase” and the “Motor Boys in the Army” from 1918 are there as well as children books belonging to Georgia Byer and Clelland Nail.

The little library in the house also holds a display shelf of reference books needed to be successful in agriculture. The majority of these books were owned by Charles Weeks the manager of Balfour Guthrie Farms in Brentwood. Titles here include California Fruits and How To Grow Them c. 1909, Injurious and Beneficial Insects of California c. 1911 and California Vegetables c. 1923.

The books of course are fragile and in many cases in poor condition but they have been stabilized, indexed, and stored. RoseAnn Yanas is to be thanked for her untiring effort to inventory all of the books.

Doreen Forlow
Resource Center Coordinator



ECCHS Welcomes New Members

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sue Arkwright | John H. Cook |
| Julie Figueroa | Steve & Margaret Guerrattaz |
| Sylvia Lesko | John & Barbara Manos |
| Larry A. Schaffer | Rich & Becky Wymore |
| Karin Benison | Juli DelBarba Favolora |
| Michael Greggans | Barbara Jansse & Family |
| Teresa Ramiriz | Teresa Sidrian & Family |
| Keeth & Kathy Lichtenberger | |

Welcome aboard!

We hope you will be an active participants
in ECCHS events and activities.



*Brentwood....
is the place for me*

Third graders at Brentwood
Elementary performed
‘Musical Brentwood’.



The annual musical, written
by BUSD music teacher
Wanda Hill over 20 years ago, traces the
history of Brentwood from Native American
times to present day – What a wonderful
way to learn our local history!

*Brentwood
has such history.....*



GINNY'S CORNER

Yesterday, I was at the museum. Schoolchildren were on the front lawn laughing and washing clothes with water pumped out of our well and playing with games of the past.

I went inside the main house. In the parlor, there is a photo of a group of young men and young women on a picnic. It is a sunny spring day on Marsh Creek. They are so young and having a lovely day. They are dressed in soft white cotton or linen dresses and the men have taken off their shoes and are standing in the creek.

As I am looking at it, my thought goes to my own family in that time period in Southwest Minnesota, 1912: My Grandmother Gladys and Grand Auntie Pete, two sisters falling in love with two brothers, Grandfather Alex and Grand Uncle Larry. I can almost hear them laughing and talking of their future life together....

This picture is one of my favorite items in the Byer-Nail house. I did not grow up in the Brentwood area, but my grandparents were wheat farmers just like so many in this area. This house makes me feel comfortable as if I were at my grandparents' house, and makes me feel that I belong in Brentwood.

Isn't it interesting that a simple picture can evoke so many warm memories and remind us of how connected we all are no matter where we grew up?

Our Museum Collection is Growing!

ECCHS depends upon the donation of photos, documents & artifacts to build collections and displays.



Thank you to these Donors

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Brentwood Press | Delta Theatre photographs |
| Bob Byer | Byron Hot Springs items |
| Billie Casey | 2 wooden chairs from Hotel Brentwood |
| ECC Fire Department | fire captain's helmet, axes |
| Doreen Forlow | Hotel Brentwood checkout sign |
| Sarah & Lynn Gursky | antique baby scale |
| Debra Janis | display boards |
| Adrian Manning | Camp Tracy maps |
| Michalene McPharlin | vintage vase & serving dishes |
| Reclamation District #2025 | Holland Tract sign |
| Elena Sanderson | milk bottle crate, Boy Scout canteen & mess kit |

 We are looking for

**Artifacts from
Hotel Brentwood**

If you have anything to help us put together a display on this treasured part of Brentwood history, contact [Sharon Johnson](mailto:Sharon.Johnson@ecchs.org)

Special Thank You to Tim Karlberg for donation of complete Civil War uniform and weapons.

See the uniform in the upstairs Service Room in the special display featuring John Fletcher, member of the CAL 100, which was part of Company A, 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry in the Civil War



Local History Days are Back!

Once again voices and laughter of third grade students from local schools can be heard at the museum as they learn what their life would have been like in the late 1800's. Morning and afternoon chores, walking to school for lessons in a one-room schoolhouse, and games without electronics is quite a different daily life than what they experience today.

The East Contra Costa Historical Society works hand-in-hand with the Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, and Oakley School Districts to enhance study of local history for all third grade students. Children tour the Byer-Nail farmhouse, Homer's Shed, and the grounds including restored fire engines, the caboose, and the Eden Plain Schoolhouse to learn about the rich history of their local community.

In the afternoon, that history is brought to life through hands-on activities when students step back into the late 1800's to experience a day in school, play games, and do chores of the time period.

Prior to shut-down due to covid, 1,400 students plus 400 parents participated in the Local History Days at the ECCHS Museum annually. Many report that it is the best field trip ever! We look forward to a full schedule of classes again in Fall.

Want to join the docent team to lead short morning tours or direct afternoon activities? It's a fun way to bring history to life for all – Plus, where else can you enjoy a cup of homemade ice cream as part of your job!

Contact: Mary Black education@eastcontracostahistory.org or call/text 925-206-5087



A SPECIAL THANKS TO Brentwood Café

for supplying all of the ice cream and butter ingredients (*milk, whipping cream & eggs*) needed for the 3rd grade school tours.

Museum Greeters Needed!

Our museum has re-opened to the public and we need friendly faces who will welcome visitors on Saturdays & third Sunday of each month thru October.

Have a Saturday or two you could be one of those friendly faces?

You do not need to lead tours, but only welcome visitors and help them find their way around the museum. Displays have new signage, so tours are fairly self-led.

We do provide a folder of information for Greeters, however, so you have more information to help answer any questions.

It's a pleasant way to spend an afternoon with a friend, so sign up together!

Contact Museum Greeters [Email](mailto:education@eastcontracostahistory.org) or Call/Text 925-206-5087



From Your President(s)

*From your Outgoing President,
Doreen Pierce Forlow*

My 3 year presidency has been remarkable in the sense that over 2 years of that time has been highlighted by COVID lockdown and museum closure.

We could have done nothing but instead, we did everything. It is the member volunteers who seized the advantage to make great changes, reinvent ourselves and present to the public the new face of ECCHS.

From a new interactive and a live website to the new windows that both look in to the new redesigned house displays and out to the new agricultural display in Homer's Shed, a fresh perspective on local history can be enjoyed.

We have reinvented ourselves over and over from the drive-thru BBQ to the 3rd grade video that replaced the hands on, in person school tours. We staged our 1st Christmas on the Farm event with the lighting of the windmill at sundown.

We opened to the public last week as a museum with a new face and a big smile.

Turning what was old into what is new – A trick of magic performed by ECCHS volunteers. Give yourselves a thank you for a job done beyond our own belief.

*From your incoming President,
Mary Casey Black*

It is with gratitude and anticipation that I look forward to serving as President of our East Contra Costa Historical Society. As a lifelong resident of Brentwood, I can think of no greater honor than to share the gift of history that ECC has given to me.

It is an exciting time for ECCHS. As Doreen shared in her message, the pandemic closure allowed us to slow down enough to take a closer look at things that needed to be done – and we did them!

What began as a restoration of windows in the house blossomed into a deeper cleaning, including digging into drawers, closets and shelves to re-discover many treasures that have been donated to our museum. A crew of dedicated workers met 2 days per week over the past 3 months to clean, sort, store, and re-create displays in the House.

Following the lead of the work done to re-invent the displays in Homer's Shed so they tell the story of the agricultural history of our area, innumerable items in the house were evaluated and used to develop displays that tell the stories of our area's rich history.

While we are proud to re-open our museum with a shiny new face, behind that work, we have also been developing systems and procedures so we can create fresh ongoing and rotating displays to keep our museum inviting through refreshed presentation.

I encourage you to take time to look through the articles of this newsletter to learn more about how your ECCHS actively engages with our community, be it through classroom visits to the museum by third grade students, speakers from ECCHS presenting history to local organizations, or how we are actively participating in community events.

Moreover, I encourage you to find a project that interests you and to become actively engaged in your local history through ECCHS. Have an idea of a way to engage with your local history that is not already in place? Share your ideas!

I look forward to serving as President this coming year to continue the fine work already happening as well as to support the work that all of the many volunteers do to make our ECCHS such a special organization.



**2022-2023
Officers**
East Contra Costa
Historical Society

Election of officers was held at the May 14 Member Dinner.

- President: Mary Casey Black**
- 1st Vice President: Gretchen Tovar**
- 2nd Vice President: Sheila Sparacino**
- Recording Secretary: Randi McCall**
- Corresponding Secretary: Shirley McCall**
- Treasurer: Kathy Bushman**

Memorial Donations



A gift to East Contra Costa Historical Society is a special way to remember or honor friends and loved ones.

The person's name will be honored on a plaque displayed on the Rose Garden Memorial Board.

January – May, 2022

Honoring	From
Josephine Allen	Linda Taylor
Alice Fletcher	Shirley McCall
Emily Marie Lucchesi	Gladice Celoni
Gladys Mercer	Shirley McCall
	Linda Taylor
Jody Merriam	Karen Cleek
	Mark & Sharon Johnson
	Ken & Mary Lou Klovee
	Muccilli Family
	Dennis Nunn
	Tom & Wendy Snyder
Pauline Papini	Norma Lewis
Matias Elijah Rogers	Dennis Nunn
Thomas Seeno	Rocco Seeno
Bonnie Schleicher	Alan & Randi McCall
	Shirley McCall
Frances Stornetta Welch	Norma Lewis

Buy-A-Brick

Engraved bricks border the sidewalk of the Resource Center. The bricks can honor family members, pets, organizations, or others.

\$100 per brick

Contact [Kathy Bushman](#)
530-519-2404

or [Shirley McCall](#)
925-634-4049



[Click here for a Brick Purchase Form](#)

Thank You to our Brick Donors

Karin Benison	Alan & Randi McCall
Shirley McCall	Tim & Ginny Karlberg
Daniel McPharlin	

Special Thank you to

Scott Sanchez

for repairs to the John Deere Tractor

Delta Scrap & Salvage of Oakley

for funding to repaint the Eden Plain School



Click on the picture to sign up for Amazon Smile.
Every purchase you make will benefit ECCHS

Bakeless Sale – Thanks!

ECCHS wishes to express our thanks to the following members who donated to the Bakeless Sale which so far has raised about \$1,950. Not only did ECCHS benefit from this fund raiser, but no one had to turn on their ovens on these hot summer days!

Robert & Terry Damico
Ben & Lindy McCall
Alice June Bunn
Shirley McCall
John & Kathy Bushman
Cindy McMillan
Kathy Campbell
Dennis Nunn
Billie Casey
Bob & Sue Olsen
Gladice Celoni
Dawn Onalfo
James & Dorothy Clark

Dallas Shanks Chevron
Myrvin Somerhalder
Frank Hill
Earline Dal Porto
Marilyn Stacy
Delta Fence
Lois Stornetta
Dewey DeMartini
Linda Taylor
Bill & Jan Ebersole
Joe & Gretchen Tovar
Marian Ferrante
Nancy Treichelt

Peter & Jane Wolfe
Frank Grimley
RoseAnne Yanes
Gursky Ranch
Roger & Mary Kay Aldous
Frank & Diane Alexander
Mark & Sharon Johnson
Deborah Allison
Gayl Krumland
Tony & Cheryl Allegro
Christine Lerch
& Roger McMasters
Kim & Rich Ambrosino

Austin & Joanne Ashmore
Rick & Jayne Marchioni
Steve & Sherri Ayers
Orlando & Megan Martinez
Brentwood Auto Parts
Alan & Randi McCall
Lidia Beatty
Blanche Clark
Dorothy & Dan Strauch
Norma & Lana Lewis
Dianne Graham
Tom & Wendy Snyder

The Breakers

The sounds of 'hallelujah' resounded in the pole shed as the last windows in the Byer/Nail house were refurbished and reinstalled. The tremendous effort required for this work was shared between Tim Karlberg and Paul Krey, with much of it done in their respective home workshops.

The windows look wonderful in their new coat of paint! The rose garden has seldom been more spectacular, and special thanks go to Ken Klovee, Bob Byer, Tom Snyder, Linda Mitchell and Dennis Nunn for the hours spent in trimming, fertilizing and maintaining the drip system.



Old Blue, our motorized peacock, is now parked in the front of the pole barn so visitors will see it as one of the first exhibits when they enter the museum grounds.

Many of the third graders now spending a day at the museum have older siblings who have talked about how they saw the original Old Blue strutting his stuff around the yard. This next generation will hear his story and be treated to various peacock sculptures placed around the grounds thanks to Randi and Alan McCall in addition to seeing our mobile folk-art tribute.



The Breakers and several other volunteers did a wonderful job of grooming the grounds, schoolhouse, caboose and Homer's Shed in preparation for opening day and the third grade class visits. As soon as a needed seal for the forklift is received we will hopefully once again be up and running.

NEW IN THE MERCANTILE



June Highlighted Item

4 piece set
Antique Royal Vienna Peinture
a la Main Roses dishware

Can be sold separately or as a set.

[Email mj](mailto:mj) for details.



Fun Fact: Our Mercantile was the original County Tax Assessor's Office for east county area and was located on First Street, Brentwood, where the fire station stands today.

It was moved in early 1900's to a ranch on Vasco Road to be used as a bunk house for seasonal farm workers. When Los Vaqueros Reservoir was constructed, research on all buildings was done and when its historical significance was recognized, it was offered to ECCHS.

It was cut to leave only the front half and restored by Clyde Hawkins and Norm Ruddick and named **C&N Mercantile** in their honor.

34th Annual Community BBQ

September 11, 2022

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Enjoy an afternoon with friends and family at the Museum

Good Food

*Tri-Tip Sandwich Corn-on-the-cob
Tomato Salad Potato Salad Dessert*



\$25/Dinner

\$15 ages 6-12

Under 6 free

**Docent led tours through House & Homer's Shed
Lessons in Eden Plain Schoolhouse ~ Music ~ Raffle Prizes**

Tickets will be mailed to all members by August 1



East Contra Costa Historical Society
P.O. Box 202
Brentwood, CA 94513

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Museum Greeters Needed!

We need friendly faces to welcome visitors to the museum.
See how you can help out your museum in this easy and fun way
on page 4 of this newsletter!

