



LOS MEGANOS

Newsletter of East Contra Costa Historical Society

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October, 2022

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34th Annual Community BBQ a Huge Success!



Members enjoyed a beautiful afternoon visiting with one other, listening to toe-tapping music by Burl Jam, and viewing updated exhibits on the grounds, in the Byer/Nail House, Homer's Shed, and Resource Center.

A good time was had by all!



Boy Scouts from Troops 90 & 152 raised the flag and led pledge



Burl Jam provided toe-tapping music



Liberty Choir sang the national anthem



Kathy & Wendy welcomed guests



Mistress Karlberg instructs students in Eden Plain Schoolhouse

The annual ECCHS Barbeque is truly a community event and serves as the major fundraiser to keep our museum and grounds operating. It is made possible by dedication of many volunteers and generous donations by community members and organizations.

A special Thank You to Chairperson Chuck Hunter for his leadership and work to make this event a success.



Porfirio Medina, the last Station Master of Brentwood Train Depot is introduced

See full list of Thank You's to community members and donors on page 3.



Keep up with ECCHS online

www.eastcontracostahistory.org

Resource Center Treasures

A new rotating display is on view at the Kathy Leighton Resource Center. Our area has always celebrated their culture and their harvest. The display in the main room of the Resource Center reflects those times in the distant past and the near past with these memories.

The 1925 Apricot Festival in the Brentwood Park was the first of its kind in the area. The building of the irrigation canals in the area brought water to the land which was ideal for growing crops such as apricots. Due to prosperity and the availability of work, the population increased 200% and the time was right for its first big celebration. The city staged a parade and crowned a child king and queen of the event.



In the early 1950s the park was center stage for 4th of July Carnique sponsored by the Brentwood Lions Club. It was a unique combination of a carnival and barbeque which combined to form the word Carnique. The event was topped off with a new car raffle and a fireworks display.

Many harvest type festivals followed including the Brentwood Harvest Festival (1983-1987), the long running Brentwood CornFest, and in most recent years, the Harvest Fest hosted by Harvest Time Brentwood.



The Holy Ghost Festival has been an annual celebration in Oakley since 1948. Oakley's own Harvest Festival and parade was highlighted by the raffling off of a fully outfitted horse. Currently Oakley celebrated the Heart of Oakley Festival.

Byron has had its Rail Fair and Discovery Bay features an annual Holiday Boat Parade.

The Frozen Bun Run on New Years Day on Bethel Island is a longstanding celebration. While the viewers bundle up and sip Bloody Marys, the contestants line up for their chance to water ski. You must wear a bathing suit but cannot wear a wet suit. A boat pulls the skier off the dock at Boyd's Harbor. If you can stay up on the skies after hitting the icy water and make your way down the slough, you win a round of applause. The Island's most recent event is the Berry and Boat Festival. A queen is crowned and she will represent Bethel Island for the next year.

New additions to our area include El Dia de Los Muertos and the La Gran Fiesta Hispanic Heritage Event, both in Brentwood.

Visit the Resource Center (open Monday & Wednesday 1:00-4:00) to view the display, *Community Celebrations*



The Resource Center has benefitted from the dedication and skills of our Student Volunteer Lyn (Gwenlyn) Corrie since April 2021.

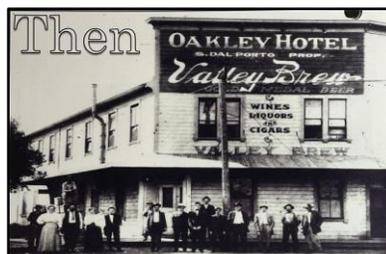
Graduating from Liberty High School in June 2022, Lyn plans to attend LMC in the Fall and then transfer to San Francisco State in the Spring to earn

her Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology. After that, she plans to attend Sapienza University in Rome to earn her Master's Degree in the Classics.

She has become very proficient in Past Perfect, our archival inventory program and is indispensable to our Resource Staff for her computer knowledge.

We thank Lyn for her invaluable contributions to ECCHS and wish her all the best in her future studies!

2023 ECCHS Calendars Are Here!



Explore the history of 12 locations in East Contra Costa County on the pages of this year's calendar!



\$15

Purchase at the Museum Resource Center or order on ECCHS website.

BBQ Thank You's

This event could not happen without the tireless effort and time donated by our many ECCHS & community members. Their efforts are appreciated more than words can express.

ECCHS owes a huge debt of gratitude to the following individuals and businesses for their donations to offset the costs of the barbecue:

Brentwood Rotary Club	G & S Farms	Nunn Family Vineyards
Rotary Interact Club	Nunn Better Farms	Tamayo Family Vineyards
Smith Family Farms	Brentwood Café	Lions Club of Brentwood
Bill Brandt Ford	Brentwood Fine Meats	Steve & Sherri Ayers
Delta Pure Water	Brentwood Funeral Home	Robert Fletcher III
Stanley Pereira	Brentwood Grocery Outlet	David Hunter
Food Maxx	Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery	Ron Nunn
Brentwood Union School District	Knightsen School District	



ECCHS thanks these groups and individuals who contributed their time and talent to making the event a success:

Lauralye Casipit - Dutch Oven demonstrations
 Liberty Choir - National Anthem
 Boy Scout Troops 90 and 152 – Flag raising
 Rob Brandt & Brentwood Rotary - Setup
 Brentwood Lions Club - Grounds prep
 Rod Linn - Burl Jam music
 Roger Aldous - Hit & Miss Engine
 Ginny Karlberg – Schoolhouse Lessons



Thank you for the many community donations to raffle baskets:

Sue Arkwright	Blackhawk Museum	Zephyr Grill & Bar
Bowlero-Harvest Bowl	Pat Hunter	Brentwood Auto parts
Brentwood Auto Spa	Kinder's Meats	Mountain Mike's Pizza
Delta Black Bear Diner	Trader Joe's	Brentwood Fine Meats
Discovery Bay Safeway	Brentwood Safeway	
Marilyn Senn	ECCHS	
Eleanor Stanaland	Imperfect Stitch	
	Megan Martinez & Lindy McCall	



Special Thank You to Jerry & Mary Black for donation of 3-night stay in Lake Tahoe for the 104-card raffle.

Thank you to our Chairpersons for their work to make this day a success:

Chairperson	Chuck Hunter	Boy Scouts	MJ Rock
Asst Chairperson	Joe Trebino	BBQ Serving Line	Melissa Cakebread
Ticket Sales	Shirley McCall	To-Go Dinner Prep	Gretchen Tovar
Raffles	Marilyn Senn	Wagon Wheel Bar	Jerry Black & Joe Tovar
Wine Acquisition	Ken Grundstadt	House Docents	Sue Arkwright

Special Thank You to Breakers for grounds preparation and bbq set up.

ECCHS is Out and About!

Local festivals and events are important to every community. ECCHS has been busy sharing their love for local history at many festivals. Here are some places we have been:



Heart of Oakley Festival

Our booth featured the first of our Oakley History Banners being created with support of a grant from the

City of Oakley. 5 banners are being created to share the history of Oakley. Juli DelBarba-Favalora, Doreen Forlow, and Carol Jensen are leading this exciting project.

Boats & Berries Bethel Island

Old Blue Golf Cart with friendly faces of Tom & Wendy Snyder and Tim & Ginny Karlberg and the cheery kids' pedal car powered by the Cannon brothers represented ECCHS well in the parade.



July 4th Parade Brentwood

There's nothing like an old fire engine decked out in red, white and blue for a

hometown parade. Dennis and Barb waved to all on the crowded streets, proudly displaying ECCHS banners!

La Gran Fiesta Brentwood

ECCHS shared pictures of Hispanic celebrations of the past at this first time event sponsored by Brentwood Chamber of Commerce to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.



GINNY'S CORNER



I have always liked this story. It is Christmassy and gives us something to think about as we approach the Christmas holiday season.

Christmas Time at Byron Hot Springs, 1912

Memories by Kathy Leighton, from Footprints in the Sand, 2001

As the holiday season approaches, I find myself drifting back to Christmases past and wondering what a shopping trip to Byron would have been like in 1912.

Byron was little more than a hamlet when my great grandfather John J Armstrong was born in 1878, but by 1912 it had developed into a peaceful and well-regulated little town as could be found anywhere in the United States. The march of civilization had reached Byron, with its churches, school, businesses, a population of 400 and a community of more than 3000 surrounding it. Byron was larger than Brentwood, Oakley or Knightsen.

By 1912, Byron had electric lights, a modern convenience of the telegraph, transportation, telephones and many thriving businesses. There were three saloons, four churches, a merchandise store, a barbershop, a hotel, bank and railroad station, two blacksmith shops, an ice cream parlor, a cafe, two livery stables, a newspaper, a school, the Odd Fellow's Hall, a park on Main Street and much more. I am sure that a trip to town for holiday shopping must have been quite an adventure for John Armstrong and his wife, Cassie.

On coming to town, Cassie must have stopped at Plumley's merchandise, a state-of-the-art general merchandise store, supplying groceries, table delicacies, glassware, light hardware, dry goods, notions and almost anything else a customer may have needed. She may have purchased ribbon at a special Christmas gift or extra herbs and spices for favorite holiday recipes. Plumley's was also a gathering place for many of the locals, and Cassie may have found occasion to stop and chat with Bella Morchio, Clara Houston, or Bertha Richardson.

While Cassie was shopping and visiting, John very well may have visited with Mr. A. N. Thomas to discuss the price of spring lambs at the market in San Francisco, or he may have wandered down the street to Franke's Blacksmith and Horse Shoeing to have a steel rim stretched or shrank to fit his wagon wheels.

Cassie then may have ventured into Charlie Holman's butcher shop for some fresh fish or C. C. Pratt's bakery to purchase some burnt-sugar cookies. John perhaps would have slipped into Tobe LeGrand's barber shop, treating himself to a professional cut and catching up on the local gossip.

After attending to their own chores and necessities, John and Cassie may have attended choir practice at the Congregational Church to prepare for the upcoming Christmas services with other families such as the Middletons, Heisers, Krumlands, Kelsos and other Armstrongs.

Christmas was an occasion for celebration. The Armstrong neighbors busied themselves preparing for a special religious holiday many weeks in advance. It was time for family and friends to gather for a festive dinner. The season would fill the kitchen with the aromas of freshly baked cookies, breads, brandied fruits, and of course a huge Turkey which Cassie had grain fed for months.

I cannot help but think, as we see this special holiday become more and more commercial each year in the name of progress, that we have lost much of the true meaning of Christmas. In 1912, most gifts exchanged were candy cane cookies, rich fruit and nut cakes prettily packaged or fruit packed in a glass jar tied with colorful bows.

Young people would spend hours cutting out snowflakes, making paper chains, pulling taffy and listening to their elders tell stories. Christmas morning would not bring an elaborate train sets, new bicycles or Nintendo sets neatly placed under the tree as today, but my guess would be that the children found wonderful, warm memories which they could carry throughout their lives!



ECCHS Welcomes New Members

Nick & Kathy Canata
Bethi Carver Gibb
Sharon Henson
Tim & Rita Kelley
Frances Madrone
Bryan & Linda Scott
Dr. Bridgitte Schaffer
David Worsham

Brian & Dione Crayne
Daniel Hanel
John Marsh Historic Trust
Robert S. Kidwell
John & Susannah Meyer
Betty Miller & Martin Freitas
Debra L. Thomas

Welcome aboard!

**We hope you will be an active participant
in ECCHS events and activities**

Christmas on the Farm
Sunday, Dec 4 11:00-sunset
ECCHS Historical Museum

Music Old-fashioned Games
Story-telling Cookie decorating
History Treasure Hunt

Craft Activities Raffle Baskets
Handcut Silhouettes
Family Photo Ops

*Windmill
lighting
at dusk*



**Want to be part of making this
fun day happen?**

**Contact Mary Black
text/call 925-206-5087
or email ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org**



**Plein Air Artists capture glimpses
into the past at ECCHS Museum.**



**Would an organization you
belong to like to visit the
Museum?**

**Contact Group Tours
docents@eastcontracostahistory.org**

Our Museum Collection is Growing!

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



 **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](#)

Thank you to these Donors June-September

Carol Hoffman	Wedding Dress of Hoffman family
Barry & Kathy Gursky	Metal WWI Toy Soldiers
Jeremy Tovar	Desert Storm & Iraq Army Uniforms
Jack Tipton	Vietnam Army Medic Uniform
Cathy Wolfe	Mirror from Hotel Brentwood
Freedom High School	Collection of Freedom Yearbooks
Tony Medina	Southern Pacific Brentwood Yard Map
Liberty High School	2018 CA State Champions Football TeeShirt



*Mirror from Hotel Brentwood
donated by Cathy Wolfe adds to
our display in the Dining Room*

Easy Ways to Give to ECCHS

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.

June – September, 2022

Honoring	From
Dolores Vengley Burton	Norma Lewis
Bonnie McLain	Kathy Hampton
Jim Sherfield	Kathy Hampton

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



Brick Purchase Forms available on ECCHS website

Thank You to our Brick Donors

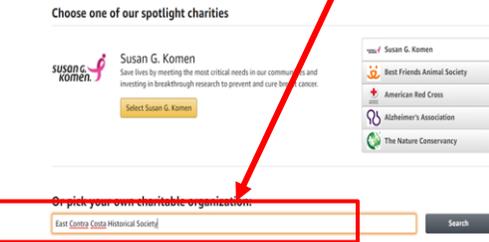
Ginny Karlberg	Becky Wymore
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Amazon Smile

0.5% of each purchase goes to ECCHS
3 EASY CLICKS!!

1. Log on to: www.smile.amazon.com
2. Type in East Contra Costa Historical Society



3. Sign Up!

Choose from almost a million charities, schools, and other nonprofits. We will reach out to the organization you select to ensure it is ready to accept donations from Amazon.



ECCHS earns about \$300 per year from Amazon donations!

Make your Amazon purchases count!

A simple one-time signup keeps \$\$ coming to ECCHS!



Holidays are Coming! ~ Think ECCHS as you start your shopping!

Sign up for Amazon! Purchase a Brick for a lasting family gift! Give 2023 ECCHS Calendar
Give the Gift of Local History – Check out the books available

Calendars & Books can be found in Gift Shop on website www.eastcontracostahistory.org
Order online and have shipped (\$/h fees apply) or browse online and purchase at Museum Resource Center

Breakers Update

The Breakers never really have a 'down time' since there is always work to be done down on the farm!

An essential need for the museum is adequate storage space. It has become glaringly apparent that we have outgrown our ability to store our ongoing wave of donations as well as be able to store items so that we can create and rotate exhibits for the museum.



Fortunately we have a space which provides us to add storage without causing visual blight to the museum grounds. The space between the back of the resource center and the storage trailers has a sidewalk poured a number of years ago, but the remaining dirt was serving no useful purpose. Perfect location for storage sheds! However, placing wooden sheds on bare ground invites dry rot and the potential for flooding.



Fortunately the museum acquired a donation of 25 tons of crushed rock. Through the use of tractors, wheelbarrows and shovels six inches of soil was removed and much work on our hands and knees in 90 degree weather the rock was leveled and three sheds installed. The remaining rock was used to upgrade portions of the parking lot.

Preparation for the annual BBQ took place during the week of 100+ degree temperatures, and careful examination of previous set-ups of tents and tables allowed us to feed and seat our sellout crowd using only one large tent thanks to imaginative planning of table locations in the pole barn.

Additional projects include the completion of the weather stripping of the windows in the house, framing and illuminating a large sign which will soon be on exhibit in the pole barn, redoing all of the signage identifying the buildings, bringing the forklift back to life, and now setting up the grounds for the upcoming Museum Sale.



Fortunately a recent addition to our ranks has eased the workload significantly. Tim Kelley, as Irish as his name would suggest, has firmly established himself as a force to be reckoned with. A retired insulation and construction professional, he is truly a jack-of-all-trades. As an extra bonus he is younger than most of the rest of our motley crew!

Fortunately, we have our wonderful Breakers who give their time, energy and expertise to keeping our museum in good condition and continually bringing our local history to life!~ **THANK YOU!**



Thank You

Brentwood Decorative Rock
24 tons of crushed rock

Casey's Auto Body
Custom-ordered paint for Byron Hot Springs Omnibus

Rose & Sons Glass
Glass for restored windows of Byer/Nail House

Contra Costa Fire Equipment
Servicing of all fire extinguishers



Do you shop at ACE Hardware?
Support Breakers' projects

If you shop at Ace Hardware and do not use your Purchase Points, tell the clerk at checkout that you would like credit to go to ECCHS (account #1666).

Points add up quickly and make a difference for our operational expenses!

November Member Dinner

Sunday, November 13

San Joaquin Yacht Club – Bethel Island



1:30 – Gathering/Socializing

2:30 – Dinner served

3:00 – Speaker: Chris Lauritzen

Boats, Bridges, and Dredges in the Delta

Enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner with all the Trimmings!

\$35/Dinner

Reservation Letter will be mailed to members mid-October.

Reservations due Tuesday, November 8th



How did they learn about us? (as reported on sign-in sheets)
Driving by Google From a Friend
3rd Grader visited with school Newspaper

Our Museum has welcomed 255 visitors during Open Hours this summer!

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