



LOS MEGANOS

Newsletter of East Contra Costa Historical Society

Serving Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Oakley

Volume 25, Issue 1

February, 2025

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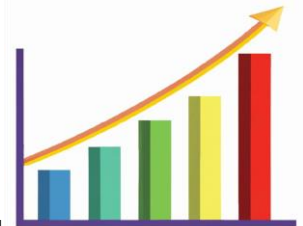
Reservations due March 10

Looking to 2025

ECCHS has made great strides toward **Bringing Local History to Life!** through growth and expansion of projects and activities in 2024.

Over 6,500 volunteer hours* dedicated to our museum this past year resulted in many gains toward ECCHS goals:

- The museum shifted its open hours to earlier in the day and doubled hours open time to 4 hours. Museum welcomed **483 visitors** in 2024.
- Membership gained **40 new members** including **4 business** members
- A **Members Night at the Museum** hosted 160 attendees to honor Ron & Shirley Nunn for their gift of land for museum expansion
- **Opening Day** and **Christmas on the Farm** were reinstated and welcomed many museum visitors (*Opening Day ~300 COTF ~ 1,000*)
- ECCHS participated in **12 community events** (*7 in 2022, 10 in 2023*)
- **1,617 third graders, 400+ parents** participated in Local History Days
- ECCHS partnered with City of Brentwood to create interpretive panels to commemorate history of Davis Camp at the site as we **'take history into the community'**
- Resource Center welcomed local residents and organizations researching community and family histories
- Board position of Community Director was redefined to **Community Ambassador** to focus on outreach and engagement in ALL communities.



*The 6,500 Volunteer hours were logged by 13 Breakers, 43 Docents, 8 Resource Center Workers, 6 Greeters, and 13 Board Members.

This does not even include the hundreds of hours volunteered by members at events or to chair projects! Our resolution for 2025 is to include THOSE hours!

Your Board Members

Elected Officers

Mary Black

President

Gretchen Tovar

1st Vice -President

open

2nd Vice-President

Randi McCall

Recording Secretary

Shirley McCall

Corresponding Secretary

Kathy Bushman

Treasurer

Doreen Forlow

Past President

Community Ambassadors

Ted & Geri Alesna

Bethel Island

Maggie Northcut

Brentwood

Lori Favaloro

Byron

Pam Moore

Discovery Bay

Melissa Cakebread

Knightsen

Kim Ambrosino

Oakley

Dennis Nunn

Director at Large



Be Part of Making It Happen!

Make a 2025 resolution to engage in at least 1 activity, a workday, or project at the Museum this year!

Keep up with ECCHS online

www.eastcontracostahistory.org

Growing and Caring for our Collections

Thank You for Donations

Artifacts & Documents

Kim Ambrosino	Local Newspapers
Kathy Bushman	Tools for Breakers
Kristin Gallegos	Almond Huller
David Garcia	Youth Bed
Kathy Gursky	Cake Carrier
Sherrie Hamilton	Davis Camp Panels flash drive
Jorge Juarez	Metal Shed
Randi McCall	Antique travel case
Isaac Montanez	Newspaper articles
M.J. Rock	Armoire
Kermit Sveen	Belt & Buckle – John Marsh Days
Sergio Verbis	Canvas painted with business ads
Marissa Wittrien	Wash tub with wringer



Hats Off!



ECCHS houses a large inventory of items that help tell the story of yesteryear. One such collection of our museum is of hats.

Organizing those items into collections, knowing their history, and maintaining accurate inventory is crucial.

Thanks to Nancy Torres and Erica Pantle

who not only organized and labeled our 25+ hats for storage, but also researched and documented their history so when they go on display, their story is correct.



Being presented with 25+ hats to identify, research and categorize was an interesting challenge!

Working together made the task more fun and along the way, we enjoyed sharing memories of our mothers and the hats we recalled them wearing decades ago.

~ Nancy & Erica

Have you ever wished you could help your Historical Society and Museum but don't have the time to volunteer as a docent, help in the garden or work on full time projects in the Resource Center?

How would you like to work from the comfort of your home, on your own time and not have to come to the museum to volunteer?

Items that are donated to the Museum are reviewed by an Intake/Display Committee to determine if they will add to our display needs. We want to make sure that donated items are indeed displayed and used. As part of this process, accepted items are cleaned and minor repairs made prior to display or placed into archival storage.

We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to clean and/or repair items of clothing. This would entail possibly gently washing items repairing a small tear, ironing a garment or perhaps just sewing on a button.



This committee will be evaluating a large number of clothing items soon. We would really appreciate any help that anyone could provide for us.

If you are interested and would like to volunteer to help, please call or text Gretchen Tovar, 925-872-0686 or email her at artifacts@eastcontracostahistory.org

The museum has several large collections needing to be examined, organized, and a bit of history recorded.

Do you have interest/background or be willing to do a bit of research on any of these areas:

- Depression Glass
- Women's Clothing
- Military Uniforms
- Wedding dresses

Contact Gretchen Tovar, 925-872-0686 or artifacts@eastcontracostahistory.org

The **Kathy Leighton Resource Center** is open Monday and Wednesday afternoons, 1:00-4:00

Interested in helping to archive, file, organize?



Contact Doreen Forlow

resourcecenter@eastcontracostahistory.org

Breakers Update

If you have ever wandered the grounds of the Museum, you will have noticed an old façade along the south fence. At one time, this façade disguised the end of the original resource center, which was a mobile home between the back of the house and the restrooms. It was moved near the school house over ten years ago when the Kathy Leighton Resource Center was built.

The original plan was to extend the representing a section of an original support post combined with exciting resulted in the decision to take it the museum, a process that is about of years to come.

In place of the façade construction, small pole barn which initially will be rebuild the pilot house of the Victory I, trucks across the San Joaquin River



façade to include a series of store fronts pioneer downtown. High winds, a rotted plans for expansion of the museum have down as the first step in plans to expand to begin and will continue for a number

Breakers are about to begin to erect a used as a site to disassemble, store and a ferry boat which once carried cars and where the Antioch Bridge stands.



Vehicle Barn Coming Soon!

Vehicles from yesteryear have been lovingly restored through the years and reside in the open Pole Barn where they are enjoyed by museum visitors. However, over time, hot and cold, dry and wet weather take their toll on these beautiful vehicles.

ECCHS has been setting aside money for years to build an enclosed structure to house and display these vehicles. With saved monies augmented by a generous donation from Ken Grundsted, a Vehicle Barn is now in our immediate future!

Bids have been received on construction of a large (40'x60') barn to house the majority of the wagons and buggies currently in the open pole barn west of Homer's Shed.

These wagons and buggies will find a new home soon along with displays that give the history of wheeled transportation.

In preparation, Breakers are hard at work moving equipment and old lumber to clear the construction area.



At the same time shelves are being installed in the resource center, the railroad signal light has been taken down and is being restored, and lots of Honey-Do jobs are being assigned.

**It's an exciting time
and things are happening!**

Breakers* work Monday and Wednesday mornings 9:00-12:00

**We work a bit, then enjoy our break...*

Sound like fun?



Contact: Chuck & Bob
breakers@eastcontracostahistory.org



Museum Opening Day




Saturday, April 5th 9:00-2:00


A fun-filled, family-oriented day of old-fashioned fun!

- Music on the front lawn * Museum Tours * Petting Zoo * Games of 1800's
- Schoolhouse Lessons * Quilts * Homemade Ice Cream
- Covered Wagon * Caboose * Fire Engine * Tractors


Pancake Breakfast
 9:00-12:00
 Start your morning with a yummy breakfast
 Pancakes and sausage
 Coffee, hot chocolate, orange juice



Rotary
 Club of Brentwood



LIONS
 INTERNATIONAL
 Brentwood CA



\$5/child **\$10/adult** **\$25/family**
ages 2-16 *up to 2 adults* *3 children*

Tickets available on Opening Day at the museum
 Thank you to Brentwood Lions & Rotary Clubs
 ** All proceeds benefit ECCHS **



Museum Open Hours April ~ October 10:00am – 2:00pm

In 2024, we welcomed 483 week-end visitors to our museum!

To welcome our visitors, we need **Week-end Greeters!**

Week-end Greeters are the welcoming, smiling faces of our museum
 Greeters do not lead formal tours, but help guide visitors around the grounds.



I would like to be a Greeter!



docents@eastcontracostahistory.org
 or call/text 925-206-5087

A brief training is held to acquaint Greeters with the museum and historical information

Greeters can choose to work a 2-hour shift
 10:00-12:00 or 12:00-2:00 or the full 4-hour shift

All helping hands are welcome!



I can help dust, wash, sweep, polish

Museum Cleaning Day
House, Grounds, & Vehicles
Saturday, March 29
9:00-12:00



Our museum opens to the public & for third grade field trips in April
 We want our grounds, vehicles, and buildings to be shiny and clean

Contact: ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org or call/text 925-206-5087



ECCHS to Host Car Show

Saturday, June 28, 2025

Nostalgia will abound when classic cars 1975 or older gather on ECCHS Museum grounds for this new event organized by members Joe Favaloro and Tony Campagna and fellow car enthusiasts Gil Hagar and Danny Schliesman of Coffee & Clutches.

Plans are now underway to make this a fun day for participants and attendees alike to celebrate days of the past by marveling at classic cars and exploring museum displays that evoke memories and shared history.

We are looking for volunteers to help with planning, organizing activities for the day, and reaching out to potential sponsors as well as working the day of the event. Organizational meetings will start early February.

This sounds like something just up my alley!



cruisin@eastcontracostahistory.org

More detailed information coming soon!

Local History Days are Coming!

The Museum will once again come alive with the sound of 3rd grade students from local schools starting in April.

East Contra Costa Historical Society works hand-in-hand with Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, and Oakley School Districts to enhance study of local history for all third grade students. Children tour the museum to learn about the rich history of their local community in the morning, followed by lunch under the Pole Barn.

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.

1,600 students plus 400 parents participate in the Local History Days at the ECCHS Museum annually. Many report that it is the best field trip ever!



A special THANK YOU to Brentwood Café
who provides all the whipping cream, milk, and eggs for these field trips!

Want to be part of this program? 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!

32 days of class visits are scheduled for April – May

We need docents!

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



A Docent Orientation/Training will be held March 19th 1:00-3:00

Don't Forget to Renew Your 2025 Membership see page 5

Make a Lasting Gift to ECCHS

Buy-A-Brick

Look for Bricks Recognizing These Community Members

Joe & Lori Favalaro
purchased by Gretchen Adcock

Geraldine & Preston Beeks
purchased by Steve Beeks

Marcy Strle Robison
purchased by Kathy Bushman

Dan & Jackie Hanel

Richard & Norma Lewis
purchased by Bob & Barbara Byer

Dick & Norma Lewis
purchased by Lana Lewis

Recognize a family member, organization, pet with a brick at the Museum!

Contact: Kathy Bushman 530-519-2404 or Shirley McCall 925-634-4049



Donation \$100 per brick

Make a Memorial Donation



A gift to East Contra Costa Historical Society is a special way to remember honor friends and loved ones. The family of the individual will be notified (*no amount mentioned*)

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

Memorial Donations October thru December, 2024

Honoring	From	Honoring	From
Carol Chavez	Shirley McCall	Norma Lewis	Byron Library Club
Jack Harrison	Cathy Massoni		Gladice Celoni
Verna Kruse	Cathy Massoni		Dewey DeMartini
Shannon Marchio	Freitas Family		Freitas Family
Mary Richards	Kathy Hampton		Michael & Mary Keiser
Edith Schrader	Dewey DeMartini		Lana Lewis
	Jim & Lynn Machado		Shirley McCall
Toni Shannon	Linda Taylor		Debbie Re
			Rodriquez Family
			Leslie Servin

Honor & Celebrate



Looking for a special way to honor or celebrate a special occasion?

Anniversary? Birthday? Recognition? Thank You?

Honoring & Celebrating

Stephanie Ayers' Birthday
honored by Shirley McCall

Isaac Montanez's School Dedication
honored by Leslie Servin

Ron & Shirley Nunn's Donation of Land
honored by Leslie Servin

Make a donation to the Historical Society!

The honored person(s) will be notified of the donation (*no amount mentioned*).

Sheila Sparacino
Docent
Cleaning Day Lead
2nd VP of Board
Gardener



East Contra Costa Historical Society & Museum recently lost two active members. We thank them for their dedication of time, energy, and commitment to ECCHS.



Joe Senn
Breaker
Board Member
'internet sleuth'

Community Ambassadors Sparking Connections

Serving the Communities of Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Oakley

East Contra Costa is a special place to live!

The six communities served by ECCHS each have a unique yet shared history

A team of energetic Community Ambassadors is enthusiastically reaching out to engage ECCHS with all six communities it serves.



Reach out to your Community Ambassador to get involved!

[You can contact them directly through ecchs website.](#)



Kim rides in Oakley July 4th parade



Father Ron of St. Anne's holds Then-Now photo presented by Lori



Sharon walks in Knightsen Christmas parade, (2023)



Maggie with Brentwood Community Tree

Pam at Discovery Bay Boutique



Community Ambassadors

Bethel Island – Ted & Geri Alesna
 Brentwood – Maggie Northcut
 Byron – Lori Favaloro
 Discovery Bay – Pam Moore
 Knightsen – Melissa Cakebread
 Oakley – Kim Ambrosino

A big **THANK YOU** to

Sharon Somerhalder Johnson who has served as Ambassador to Knightsen for this several years!

Sharon is not going anywhere, she will still be serving ECCHS as a docent and Display Committee Chairperson

Ambassador to Bethel Island has been vacant until just now. Ted & Geri, we look forward to being present in Bethel Island soon!

Christmas on the Farm A Good Time Was Had By All!!

The weather fully cooperated and the sunny yet brisk day brought out hundreds of families to the ECCHS Museum to celebrate a family-friendly day of old-fashioned fun .



The festive atmosphere of music, games, activities, vendors, and food brought the museum grounds to life on December 8th



Lighting of the windmill at dusk capped off a perfect day!

Thank you to Bloomfield Vinyards for donation of all proceeds from wine sales to the Museum!

Focus on Local History Guides Energy of ECCHS



Brentwood City staff with ECCHS members and Frank Davis attended dedication of panels on January 6th.

Thank you, City of Brentwood,
for helping ECCHS
'take history to the community'
where it can be enjoyed by all.



Davis Camp Interpretive Panels Installed

This past year ECCHS has had the honor of working with the City of Brentwood to 'take history into the community'. Three interpretive panels to memorialize the site where Davis Camp once stood have been installed where hiking/biking trails converge at Brentwood Boulevard and Sunset Road.



Barbara Bettencourt & Cynthia Quan, of Trilog Pedal Pushers, were first to visit the panels.

They were 'gifted' a year's ECCHS membership to celebrate!

Downtown Brentwood Walking Tours

Do you know which buildings are on Rolando's Block?
Where the train depot was?
Or where Bacigalupi's Saloon stood?

ECCHS needs Walking Tour Guides!!!

Being a guide for walking tours sound interesting?

Contact Mary Black
Call/Text 925-206-5087

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org

Training and materials are provided.



Guided group tours will start in May. We anticipate needing at least 4 Guides to accommodate interest expressed for tours.

Development of walking tour materials was funded by a 2024 Brentwood Economic Grant.

2024 Member Night at the Museum

Twinkling lights under the Pole Barn on a perfect Fall evening, beautifully decorated tables, light refreshments and wine from Nunn Family Vineyards set the stage for a magical evening on November 7th. 160 ECCHS and Nunn Family members gathered to honor Ron & Shirley Nunn for their generous donation of land to the museum.

A special display in the Resource Center traced the impact 4 generations of the Nunn Family has had on our local history.



Thank you to Annette Holdiman for her attention to detail in organizing this special evening

Member Dinners Highlight Local History

Frank Davis delighted ECCHS members at the November Member Dinner with stories about the impact of Davis Camp on the many families who came to California for work and a better life.

"There were jobs here. They called us 'fruit tramps', but that's OK because it instilled work ethic in us that has built part of this country."

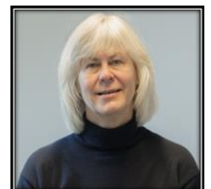


Frank Davis is nephew of Cal Davis who built Davis Camp in 1936

Members will learn and be entertained at the same time with the interesting history of Knightsen at the March Member Dinner

Speaker **Carol Jensen**, with deep local family roots, has been fascinated with local history since the early 1960s and delights in discovering the cultural history of the Delta.

She is a respected author and LMC lecturer on local history.



ECCHS Welcomes New Members

Frank & Hiwanah Davis
Randall & Debrorah Enos
Ron & Judy Enos
Ronald & Lyndell Enos
Russ & Julie Enos
Susan Flagg

Jeff Johnson
Beverley Jolly
Maureen Murray
Marihelen Palmer
Olee & Linda B. Stein

Welcome aboard!

We invite you to be active participants in ECCHS events and activities.

ECCHS is entirely funded through
MEMBERSHIP FUNDRAISING EVENTS DONATIONS

We receive no funding from city, county, state, or federal sources

MEMBERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO MUSEUM & PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Renew for 2025



Mail

Membership forms were mailed to all current members in December
Complete and mail in form.



Click

www.eastcontracostahistory.org

Click on JOIN



Scan

Scan to go directly to online membership



2025 Membership Drive Jan20Feb25

ECCHS has launched a **2025 Membership Drive** to actively reach out to larger community
January 20 – February 25

Thousands of visitors enjoy the museum each year. They attend community events such as the BBQ, Christmas on the Farm, or Opening Day, accompany a third grader on a field trip, come to research their family or an event from long ago, or they drop by for a visit on a week-end.

But even though thousands enjoy our museum and even more residents enjoy checking out 'Thing-a-ma-Jigs' at a local festival, seeing the fire engine in a parade, or taking a downtown walking tour, our membership continues to be about 260 members. East Contra Costa is home to about 125,000 people.

We can do better than this!

We have reached out through

- Article in The Press
- Invitation to join on Social Media,
- Email to people who have visited

**JOIN
ECCHS
2025**

But the contact that will have the most impact would be one made by YOU!

As a member, **YOU** obviously already understand and support the important work that ECCHS does to preserve and share local history.

We ask **YOU**, as a member, to think of your own friends and family who may enjoy being a member to support the same important work that **YOU** do. Encourage them to join.

If each member engaged one other member, our membership would **DOUBLE!!**



Consider giving a 'Gift of Local History'

Complete a membership form with payment for your recipient.
Request a Gift certificate with envelope. We will get them to you!

To request Gift certificate with envelope

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org or call/text 925-206-5087

EAST CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March Member Dinner
Sunday, March 16

1:30 Gathering 2:30 Dinner

Speaker: Carol Jensen, local historian
It Happened in Knightsen....Who Would have Known?



Knightsen Farm Bureau Hall

3020 Second Street, Knightsen



Corned Beef Dinner
Corned Beef
Cabbage
Potatoes, Carrots
Cornbread
Cake

Cost: \$35.00

*Reservation forms and self-addressed envelopes
will be mailed to all members.*

Reservations due by Monday, March 10

Thank you for being an EMAIL subscriber!

*Money saved on printing and mailing costs
will be used on museum projects!*

Renew Your 2025 Dues

Encourage a friend or family member to join
Give a 'Gift of Local History', a gift of membership



MAIL



CLICK



SCAN

See page 5