



LOS MEGANOS

Newsletter of East Contra Costa Historical Society

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

Volume 26, Issue 1

February, 2026

In This Issue

Renew Your Dues 2026

  See Page 4

Opening Day Coming!

Saturday, April 4

See Page 5

Cruisin' through History

See Page 9

Community Ambassadors
Sparking Connections!

See Page 8

Property Expansion Plans

See Page 7

Your Board Members

Elected Officers

Mary Black

President

Dall Barley

1st Vice -President

Dennis Nunn

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

Tony Campagna

Director at Large

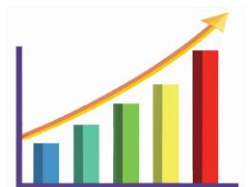
Looking to 2026

ECCHS has made great strides toward **Bringing Local History to Life!** through growth and expansion of projects and activities in 2025.

- Increased local history was seen throughout East Contra Costa through a **Satellite museum in Byron, history panels, Walking Tours, partnerships** with Chambers of Commerce and other non profit organizations, and **participation** in events in all 6 communities.
- Learning about our six communities was enriched by **Member Dinners scheduled in different community locations** and each featuring a speaker about that community 's history. We will rotate between all six of our communities ~ and learn our ECC history at the same time!
- We reached out to the larger community by instituting a Membership Drive – and **welcomed 105 new members** in 2025!
- **Members stepped up** to play a larger role in keeping our expanding museum programs operating.
- **Member Night at the Museum** hosted 140 attendees for this special evening under the stars and a beautiful full Harvest Moon!
- **Communication** expanded by  *The Windmill* Keeping ECCHS Members emailed monthly to members
- Our first annual **Cruisin' through History** Car Show welcomed 76 classic cars and over 1,000 visitors to the museum.
- ECCHS took local history to **19 community events** (7 in 2022, 10 in 2023, 12 in 2024)
- **And.....ECCHS was featured TWICE in television** segments about East Contra Costa County: Cody's Caravan & Zip Trips



Watch for this icon
See how members 'stepped up'
to make a difference!



Be Part of Making It Happen!

Make a 2026 resolution to engage in at least 1 activity, a workday, or project at the Museum this year!



Look for the 'I can help' hands
throughout the newsletter.

How would you like to join in?



Keep up with ECCHS online

www.eastcontracostahistory.org

Growing and Caring for our Collections

Vehicle Barn Needed!

Cold, heat, wind, dirt, (and even cats who love to claw buggy upholstery!) continually work against the time, energy, and funding that goes into restoring our loved vehicles.

ECCHS has saved for many years to fund an enclosed barn to house our restored vehicles and steps have been taken to start the building process.

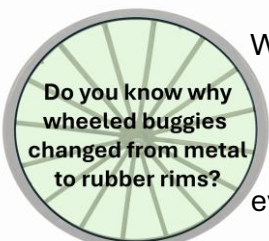
- Space identified on our existing property
- Building plans purchased
- Contact has been made with the County
- Permit process started



Thank You for your Donation to the Vehicle Barn Fund

Dall & Pat Barley
Barry & Kathy Gursky

You can donate to the Vehicle Barn Fund on ECCHS website - DONATE



We look forward to an exciting exhibit filled with interesting facts about how transportation has evolved through time.

And bringing those facts to life through restored vehicles, interesting artifacts, and stories of how transportation needs respond to and shape how we live.

The museum doors may be closed to the public for the winter, but that doesn't mean there is no activity happening! Each Fall, members of the Display Committee walks through the house, the schoolhouse, Homer's Shed, and the caboose to evaluate current displays for potential improvements, or change.

In addition to evaluating the current displays, they consider 'rotating displays' to feature specific topics to add so there is always something 'fresh and new' to welcome and engage visitors.

Many times these 'rotating displays' will be developed in conjunction with an event at the museum. For example, for the 2026 *Cruisin' through History* Car Show, we are planning a display on the Jeep to be part of the Service Room of the Byer/Nail House.

Do you have any items that may be of interest in this display? Family photos or stories?



Contact: Doreen Forlow
resourcecenter@eastcontracostahistory.org

Do You Like to Create?

Does working on displays sound interesting to you? Our goal is to designate a person (or a person with a partner) to be responsible for each different room or space of the museum.

You would work with the full **Display Team** to develop the ideas for the space, learn the local history to outline the key ideas the space will convey, and work with the artifacts to add a 'learning space' for the museum.



This sounds like something I would like to do!

Contact: ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org

Thank You for Donation of Artifacts & Documents

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Kim Ambrosino | Archival Boxes, Lawn Game |
| Mike Arata | Hotel Brentwood light fixtures
Milk fly strainer
Wilder family cabinet |
| Jeanne Canada | CornFest T-shirt – Year 1 |
| Teresa Munyon | Print of Flag Barn |
| Carol Ligon | Original painting, framed |
| John Zych | Ag in Schools materials |

Breakers Update

Museum restorations differ significantly from assembling IKEA furniture, where assuming all parts are present and instructions are clear you simply put stuff together. The opposite is true when restoring a vintage **visible gas pump** such as the one we have just completed. Taking it apart was rather easy. However the reassembly process was not, and where the next step was not obvious and required undoing something in order that the next part could fit it turned the effort into a months-long adventure.



From:



To:



This 100 year old beauty was donated to ECCHS by longtime Brentwood resident **Jack Byer**.

It stood for many years in the office of his auto repair shop, Byer's Car Care. When he retired it resided in the backyard of his home before finding a welcome home at the museum to evoke memories of earlier days.

Visible gas pumps feature a transparent cylinder that allows customers to see the amount of gasoline being dispensed.

A manual pump transferred gasoline from an underground storage tank into the cylinder.



When filled, the attendant placed the nozzle into the vehicle and opened a valve, allowing gravity to feed the gasoline into the tank.

The amount dispensed was measured by the level of gasoline in the cylinder, marked with gallon measurements.

The **Studebaker Brothers** designed and built two vehicles in our collection; the Byron Hot Springs wagonette and one of our buggies.

Although a huge number of the traditional two-passenger black buggies were built by farmers or blacksmiths there were a number of factories which manufactured wagons and buggies.

Studebaker was one of the premier builders, and a close comparison with the other buggies in our collection provides an opportunity to notice some of the fine details which they included.

ECCHS recently acquired a new buggy. It is a Top Buggy, manufactured by Studebaker, a top-of-the-line model differentiated from lesser models by having, among things, wheels painted buttercup yellow.

As we began to sand the wheels for painting, it revealed the yellow underneath. Once the body and running gear are painted black the newly painted wheels will really make it stand out.



The **pilot house from the ferry boat Victory I** is about to be disassembled and rebuilt.

We hope to save as many pieces as we can as we return it to as-new condition.

The Victory I pilot house was generously donated to ECCHS Museum by Chris Lauritzen III and his sister Margaret. We look forward to its restoration and to it being an important part of our exhibit on The Delta in our property expansion.

For more than 150 years, the Lauritzen name was synonymous with transportation on the rivers of the Delta.

Chris has extensive knowledge about (*and love for!*) the rivers of our area. **AND** he will be our guest speaker at the March Member Dinner!

You will not want to miss his presentation.
(See dinner information on last page of newsletter.)



Cruisin' through History Car Show

Saturday, June 28, 2026

Nostalgia will once again abound when classic cars 1975 or older gather on ECCHS Museum grounds for this unique car show organized by members Joe Favaloro, Tony Campagna, Gil Hagar and fellow car enthusiast Danny Schliesman of Coffee & Clutches.

CLASSIC CARS * CORNHOLE * FOOD/DRINKS * KIDS' AREA
EXPLORE YOUR MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY



Thank You
Lesley Brush
Lill Pierce
Robin Robello
for organizing
raffles for our
events

Car registration opens April 1st \$35/car entry
\$5 discount/car for ECCHS member - Become a member now!

Sponsors – Your business name on display!
Classic, Clutch, Cruisin' levels

Volunteers - Planners, Activity Organizers, Raffle Ticket Sellers

This sounds like something just up my alley!

cruisin@eastcontracostahistory.org

More detailed information to follow in **The Windmill**
Keeping ECCHS Members Informed

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.

Third grade students from Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, and Oakley School Districts enhance their study of local history as they tour the museum to learn 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!



Thank You
Kathy Griggs
Lynn Machado
for picking up these items every week



Be a 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

Docent Orientation/Training March 11th 1:00-3:00

Make a Lasting Gift to ECCHS

Buy-A-Brick

Honor family members, organizations, special occasions with an engraved brick!

Look for Bricks Recognizing These Community Members

Gene Armstrong
purchased by Shirley
McCall

Rod Linn
purchased by Lions Club of
Brentwood

Lilly Beatty
purchased by Lions Club of
Brentwood

Tom & Gloria McGrath, Brentwood Ambulance
purchased by Joe McMurtrey



\$125 per brick

Addition of symbol or logo
add \$10

Full information about logos
available online

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

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

Make a Memorial Donation

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



Name of the honored person is displayed on a plaque on the Rose Garden Memorial Board.
The family of the individual will be notified (*no amount mentioned*)

Memorial Donations October thru December, 2025

Honoring	From	Honoring	From
Deb Janis	Doreen Forlow Carol Jensen	Ron Nunn	American Ag Credit Dewey DeMartini
Anna LaFollette	Peter & Jane Wolfe		E&J Gallo Winery
Rod Linn	Dewey DeMartini		Jim & Lynn Machado



Memorial Roses at the museum honor cherished memory of a loved one. These roses in the garden and lining a front walkway are absolutely beautiful when in bloom.

Hard work by museum volunteers Marguerite Nicholson and John Gallacher has opened an additional space for memorial roses.

We have space for 3-4 new memorial roses.

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



\$200 per rose

(includes rose, plaque,
planting, care in perpetuity)

Honor & Celebrate

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



Make a donation to the Historical Society!

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

Thank You for Monetary Donations

Doug & Wendy Herman Chris Lauritzen, III
Barry & Charlene Margesson Dennis Sparacino
Streets of Brentwood Peter & Jane Wolfe
Shirley McCall

Community Ambassadors Sparking Connections

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

Making Personal Connections with Longtime Residents



Oakley Ambassador Kim Ambrosino had the pleasure of meeting **Joe & Connie Canada**, longtime Oakley residents, in their home to talk about the early days of the community.

Their stories & memories brought Oakley's history to life in the most personal and meaningful way.

Joe was instrumental in helping bring the caboose to the museum from Knightsen.



Community Ambassadors

Bethel Island – Ted & Geri Alesna

Brentwood – Maggie Northcut

Byron – Lori Favaloro

Discovery Bay – Pam Moore

Knightsen – Melissa Cakebread

Oakley – Kim Ambrosino

Bringing Local History to the Community



Photos and artifacts tell the history of Byron Hot Springs

When is an artifact more than an artifact?

When it's the **SPARK** to bring local history to its community!

And that is just what is happening in Byron and Knightsen!



Quilt frame donated by Jerry Duarte will become display table in Knightsen Satellite Museum

The frame was his grandmother's

'Telling the story' is the only way to keep history alive to connect residents (old and new alike!) with the rich heritage that has created communities as they are today. ECCHS has been taking history to the community by setting up **Satellite Museums** to display photos and artifacts that tell the stories of community history.

Byron Satellite Museum is located in the Byron Library Club with displays in the front window and cases inside that welcome visitors during downtown events.

Knightsen Satellite Museum will be in the Knightsen Garden Club Building – to open June 7, 2026!

Sharing History

The Big Reveal! Knightsen ECCHS Satellite Museum

Knightsen Garden Club
June 7, 2026 1:00 pm



Celebrating Local History!

Thank you to John Gonzalez for use of your map!



Bethel Island history will be featured at March Member Dinner.

Bethel Island Ambassadors, Ted & Geri will have artifacts to share.

Chris Lauritzen, III will speak on **Delta Double-Ended Ferries Old & New**

Celebrating Community Spirit



Lots of Treats, no Tricks at Discovery Bay Halloween Parade



Brentwood Holiday Parade

ECCHS Tree at Brentwood Deck the Park

Byron Caboose with Holiday Lights



Member Night Honors Breakers

Our museum is home to a number of treasures that have been lovingly restored. This would not be possible without countless hours dedicated by our team of Breakers.

They can turn:



Into:



They can turn:



Into:



They can turn:



Into:



ECCHS Breakers

Clyde Allen	★ Paul Krey
★ Lewis Ashcraft	Helen Martinez
John Bushman	★ John McCarthy
★ Bob Byer	Patrick McHenry
★ Tony Campagna	★ Justin Milam
Dave Donaldson	★ Joe Niec
Len Ferrier	★ Dennis Nunn
Clyde Hawkins	★ Danny Raymond
★ Chuck Hunter	Loren Robinson
★ Tim Karlberg	Norm Ruddick
★ Tim Kelley	Joe Senn
Mar Knittel	★ Tom Snyder
★ Carl Knittel	Bruce Watkins
	Dan Wilkerson

* Indicates current Breakers

And our newest Breaker

Dave Peck who joined after the Member Dinner!

Thank you to **Jerry & Mary Black** for donation of outdoor projector for events such as Member Night!

Member Night at the Museum

A full Harvest Moon and twinkling lights under the Pole Barn made for a perfect Fall evening for 144 members to gather at their museum.



Beautifully decorated tables and 'fire pits' set the ambiance. Delicious hors d'ouerves and wine from Nunn Family Vineyards were enjoyed by all.

Presentation by President Mary Black honored the work of our 'Breakers' and unveiled the conceptual plan for property expansion, including overview of six exhibit areas to be developed.

You can see the presentation on ECCHS website

Members walked through posted display of the six exhibit areas AND entered the 'to-be-built' Vehicle Barn where our vehicles are patiently wait for their walls and roof!

Thank You to Our Donors

Nunn Family Vineyards

Wine & Pouring

Jeni Groseclose

with Cindy, Karen, Tami

Food Preparation

Got-a-Party

Tables

Three Nunn's Farm

Pumpkins



Thank you **Annette Holdiman**
Tobi Benz

for making this evening so special



ECCHS Welcomes New Members

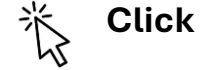
Adam & Gretchen Adcock
 Ellen Allmendinger
 Shane Ambrosino & Michele Kincaid
 Alejandro Ayala
 Eric Dixon
 Denise Duran
 Chris & Andrea Freyler
 Maryann Gonsalves
 Jeni Groseclose
 Mary Lou Martinez

Mitzi McClelland
 Justin Milam & Kira Campbell
 John & Bethany O'Donnell
 Linda Parks & Warren Denny
 Rock Slough Farm
 Chris Romero
 Mark Stivers & Michele Sauvadon
 Mike Strle
 Wayne Swisher

Renew for 2026



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



www.eastcontracostahistory.org
 Click on JOIN

You can also download form here



Scan to go directly to online membership



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

2026 Membership Drive Jan20 - Feb26

ECCHS has launched our **2026 Membership Drive January 20 – February 26**

We will reach out through articles in the press and social media.

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.

**JOIN
 ECCHS
 2026**

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.

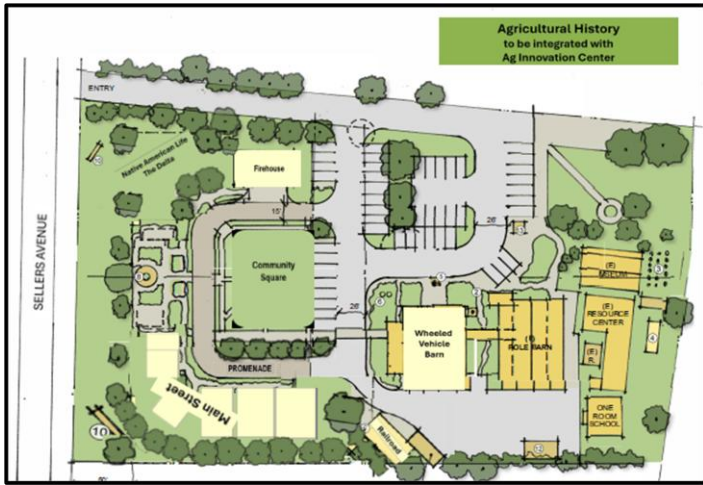
Request a Gift certificate with envelope.
 We will get them to you!

To request Gift certificate with envelope
ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org or call/text 925-206-5087

THANK YOU to These Members for including a donation with your renewal

Steve & Sherri Ayers	Rick & Jayne Marchioni
Gladice Celoni	Myrvin & Holly Somerhalder
Jeanne Chrestenson	Frank & Gloria Spinelli
Julie Elam	Alan Straub
Sharon Ellingson	Nancy Treichelt
Robert Fletcher III	Roy & Susan Vinyard
Traci Gibbons	Dolores Ward

ECCHS to Expand Property



A gift of land to East Contra Costa Historical Society by **Ron and Shirley Nunn** will double our museum grounds.

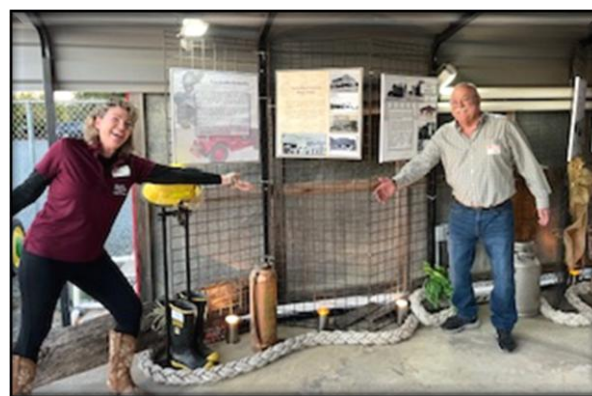
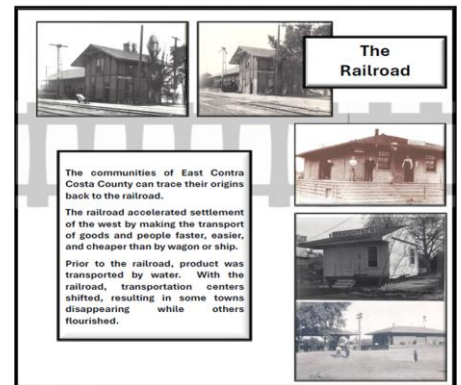
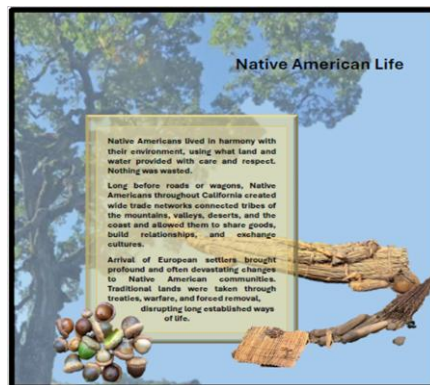
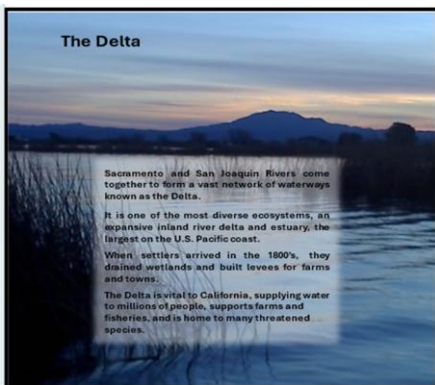
This generous gift has invigorated the Board to identify critical areas of local history that we have not had space to adequately incorporate into our exhibits.

6 Exhibit Areas to be Added

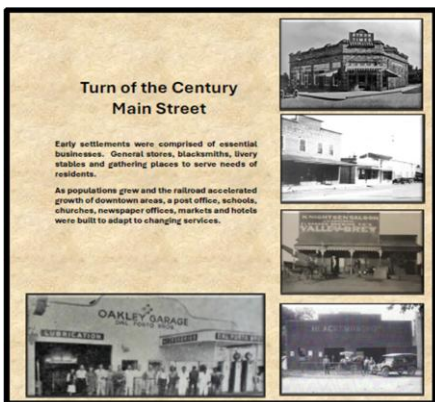
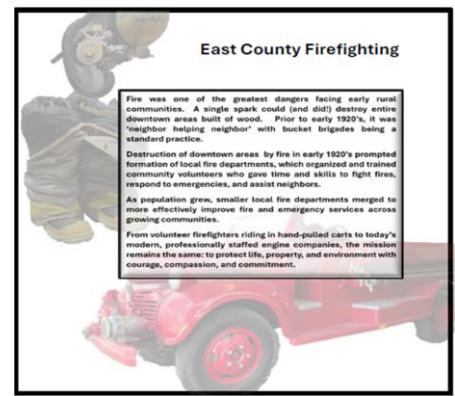
The Delta Native American Life Agriculture The Railroad Firefighting Main Street, Turn of the Century

Exhibit Teams have been established for each of these areas to research the history, identify the key ideas to be emphasized through displays, and provide direction on the exhibit development.

Each of these areas labeled on the map above, surrounding a Community Square to signify the strength of community of our area.



Geri Alesna & Tony Campagna display the Exhibit information boards for Member Night. Exhibit Boards can be viewed on ECCHS website



A Members' Meeting will be held in Spring to invite input and participation.



I would like to be part of making the expansion a reality!

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org

925-206-5087

East Contra Costa Historical Society is grateful for the talent of **Lance Crannell** of **SDG Architects** who captured the spirit of honoring local heritage and creatively translated it into the conceptual design for our property expansion.



Christmas on the Farm

Weather didn't cooperate as well as in previous years, but it did not deter hundreds of families who flocked to the ECCHS Museum to celebrate a day of old-fashioned fun.



THANK YOU
to our Musical Performers
 Sax Fifth Avenue
 Brentwood Vocal Collective
 Mele Ohana (Sr Center Ukelele Group)
 Liberty 'Rent-a-Caroler' Singers
 Christmas Strummers
 Delta Dogs



Would your business name look good here?

ECCHS proudly displays names of our event sponsors in creative ways

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org

or call/text 925-206-5087



The Museum Windmill is lit at close of Christmas on the Farm and remains lighted until January 31 as the museum's winter greeting to all.

Christmas on the Farm has become a favorite community event. It's focus on family fun, handcrafts, and games without electronics captures the feeling of earlier times.

A team of dedicated ECCHS members works hard all year to plan for this fun event. Would you like to be part of this team? We start in July!

I'd like to help plan COTF!

925-584-1717

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org



THANK YOU
to our Many Donors
Monetary, Raffles, Services

- Belinda Bittner
- Byron Delta Lions Club
- Danny Raymond
- Delta Bar & Grill
- Dennis Sparacino
- Dick & Mary Fox
- El Gallito
- Elite Landscaping
- Gateway Gas & Mart
- Halo Pet Grooming
- Home Depot
- Hurst Bookkeeping & Tax
- Mary Black
- Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery
- Paul Krey
- Raley's
- Rusty Porthole
- United Rentals



THANK YOU to our Sponsors
Gold Star
 Bay Area Builders

Garland
 Modrall & Daughters Orchard
 McCall Family

Tinsel
 Roger Brown & Sally Brown
 Corcoran Icon Properties
 Mrs. Claus (Shirley McCall)
 Julie Bretz
 Rock Slough Farms
 Friends of Liberty Singers
 The Willows at Bethel Island

THANK YOU to our SANTA
 Mike Strl
and Photographer
 Steve Nosenchuk

EAST CONTRA COSTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March Member Dinner

Sunday, March 16

1:30 Gathering 2:30 Dinner

Speaker: Chris Lauritzen, III

Delta Double Ended Ferries Old & New



Bethel Island Scout Hall

3090 Ranch Lane, Bethel Island



Corned Beef Dinner

- Corned Beef
- Cabbage
- Potatoes, Carrots
- Cornbread
- Cake

Cost: \$40.00

*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 2026 Dues

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



MAIL



CLICK



SCAN

See page 3

Support Those Who Support ECCHS

ECCHS values and appreciates our Business Members

We encourage all members to frequent these local businesses who support YOUR ECCHS



Go Granny
Traveling Notary
(925) 597-8453



F.A. Maggiore
& Sons Ranch

Knightsen
Garden Club



DLP Entertainment
Dino Piquero
(510) 828-9626



Angelica Ayon
Real Estate Broker
Discovery Bay



Does your business already belong to ECCHS?

THANK YOU!

Do you own a business that should belong to ECCHS?

JOIN TODAY!

Do you work for a business that should belong to ECCHS?

ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN!

Contact: Shirley McCall membership@eastcontracostahistory.org or call 925-634-4049

The year 2026 marks the **250th anniversary** of the Declaration of Independence by colonists to create the United States of America. Closer to home, it marks the 250th anniversary of the expedition of Juan Bautista de Anza, and the resulting colonization of Upper California by the Spanish. Your ECCHS will commemorate both of these historical events that had profound effect on the history of our area.



**Spanish Expedition
Juan Bautista de Anza**

In 1775, leader Juan Bautista de Anza left Sonora, Mexico on a colonization expedition into mostly uncharted territory of Alta California with more than 240 colonists. Following many existing trails that were known to and had been used by Native Americans for generations, the party reached their northern most point of San Francisco in April, 1776.

On their return to Monterey, they passed through East Contra Costa County toward Vasco or Altamont Pass.

ECCHS is gathering historical information and local resources to plan how to best share this history.



Declaration of United States Independence

Signing of the Declaration of Independence in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, marked the formal founding of the United States. This historic date will be celebrated throughout our nation in 2026.

ECCHS will be in the Brentwood July 4th parade and is connecting with other organizations to be part of local celebrations.

Watch for more information to follow in



I'd like to work on one of these projects!

ecchs@eastcontracostahistory.org 925-206-5087



THANK YOU to Breaker **Bob Byer** for arranging installation of solar light to top the museum flag pole.

THANK YOU to **Steve Owens of American Flag Pole** who donated time, labor, and larger flag to make this happen.

Our flag can now wave proudly over the museum day and night.

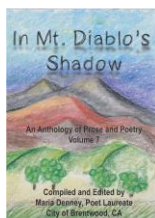


The **Brentwood campus of LMC** offers classes on a variety of topics through the Community Education Program. Courses presented by **historian Carol Jensen** are a great resource about local history including Byron Hot Springs, Balfour-Guthrie, Delta Bridges.



Check out their course listings

www.losmedanos.edu/communityed/publication.aspx



Also check out the series on poetry writing by **Brentwood Poet Laureate, Maria Denney**, who publishes the annual anthology of In Mt. Diablo's Shadow.

**LEARN
MOTIVATE
CREATE**