

# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

*Newsletter – April 2019*

Issue Number 129

Ralph Carhart, Editor



[www.fairoakshistory.org](http://www.fairoakshistory.org)

## **QUARTERLY POTLUCK & GENERAL MEETING**

**6 p.m., Tuesday, April 23, 2019**

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

7997 California Avenue

*Please bring a main dish, casserole, salad, or dessert to share.*

## **“Olives and Olive Oil”**

**Darrell Corti**

### **President’s Message**

**Jim Pearce**



We will have a new Secretary on June 1. The Woman’s Thursday Club really wanted Pat Neufeld to run for President of that group, but Pat didn’t want to do two jobs. So, we reached an agreement to have Marilyn Pearce take over the Secretary job for the rest of Pat’s term.

When we went to look for the procedure in the Bylaws to replace an elected officer who resigns, there wasn’t any. WTC has a provision to have their Board appoint a replacement for the duration of the term, and we thought that was a good idea. So, we did the same.

It does show that we need to look at the Bylaws and take care of some other revisions that have come up over the years. I’ll put together a revision committee looking forward to the July meeting. If you have any suggestions for revisions, let me know. The current Bylaws are on the website.

Finally, remember us on the Big Day of Giving in early May. We got our 501c3 accreditation, but not in time for the December deadline to register. Since the Big Day organization takes about 6% of donations for overhead, why not donate directly to the Historical Society. You'll be helping us keep the History Center alive and well.

The April meeting will feature **Darrell Corti** of the Corti Brothers Market talking about olives and olive oil. Bob Sours (ex olive oil salesman) and Jim Pearce will be meeting with Darrell the week before the meeting to talk over the presentation. As many of you know, Fair Oaks was a major producer of olives and olive oil in the early to mid 1900s.



Many of the original gnarled trees still stand on lots around Fair Oaks. The Olive Plant is a very iconic photo in our archives. Should be interesting.

### **It's My Park Day – Saturday, May 11**

Sign up at the meeting with Lynn Steen or call her at 916-967-7135. Your participation in this event gives us an "A" rating with the Park District and gains us rental discounts.



### **Our January General Meeting**

If you missed the January General Meeting, don't fret. You wouldn't have found a place to sit. Mike Aho, Administrator of the Fair Oaks Recreation and Parks District, talked about the recent bond issue and answered questions from the floor. Guesstimate is that we had about a hundred attendees.



## Walks and Presentations

We've been busy with supporting other groups interested in Fair Oaks history.

Bob Sours and Jim Pearce handled a basic Fair Oaks History presentation for the Rancho Cordova branch of the Sons in Retirement club (SIRS). Jim did an advanced "The Rest of Fair Oaks" presentation for the Woman's Thursday Club featuring eastern Fair Oaks homes and attractions. He also spoke before the Fair Oaks Recreation and Parks Board on what's happening with the Historical Society.



Bob coordinated a walking tour of the Village and Parkway put on by Robert Perricone of the Fair Oaks Church Walking Group.

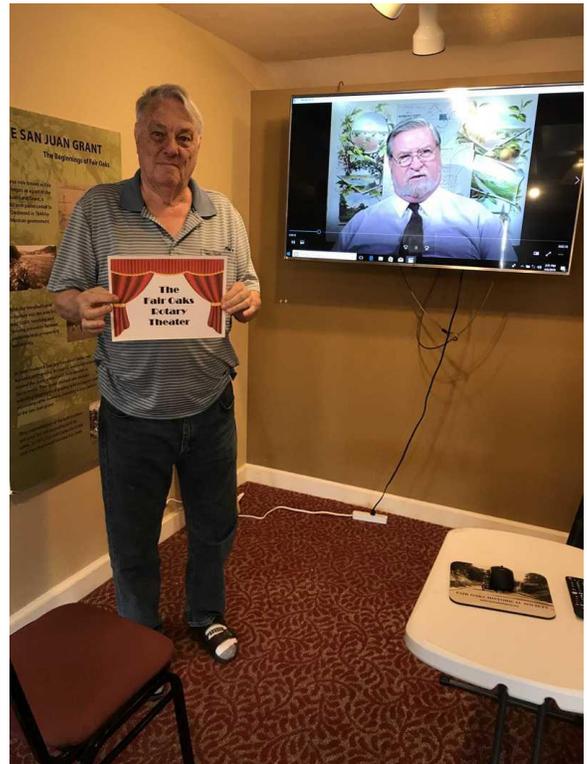
## What's New... **Jim Pearce**

If you haven't noticed, the History Center damage has been repaired and we're fully back in business.

Bob Sours has been pestering us to look into small grants to fund improvements to the History Center.

We found two good possibilities and applied for both.

The first was a grant program through State Farm Insurance Company which donates \$500 to any non-profit that has a current or former employee who volunteers 40 or more hours with the non-profit. That's Bob. We got the grant and used the money to upgrade



the 20-year-old laptop at the History Center to a new Lenova with Windows 10 and lots of speed and memory.

The second grant was through Fair Oaks Rotary Foundation for \$1000 to replace our three year old 23-inch touch screen computer with a combination 55-inch flat screen television and laptop computer to run a mini-theater with our Fair Oaks history movies, slide shows and presentations in the alcove at the History Center. We're still rearranging the room, but have the system going and it's impressive.

We also have our map display back up with the addition of 6 new maps. Maps cover the period 1885 to 1965. Drop by and take a look.

## **Memorial Day Celebration at the Fair Oaks Cemetery**

The 21<sup>th</sup> Annual Memorial Day Celebration will be Saturday, May 25, 2019, 10:00 am, at the Fair Oaks Cemetery. This year's theme recognizes the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Legion. There will be the traditional Avenue of Flags, memorial speakers and refreshments afterwards, provided by the Fair Oaks-Orangevale Grange and Historical Society members.

## **Soup Night Friday, November 1, 2019**

### **Soup Night Donations, Sponsors and Volunteers Needed**

At the upcoming April meeting we will begin collecting quality donations for our important Soup Night fundraiser. This is how we keep the History Center open and growing. We need:

- gift cards for restaurants, spas, craft and specialty stores
- gift baskets with food items, garden supplies, kitchen supplies
- hand crafted items, pictures, quilts, place mats, scarves, art objects
- NEW clothing
- time shares. vacation homes
- quality wine

The raffle is headed by Joilyn Hollingsworth, 916-531-5967). Pat Neufeld will be assisting her, 916-698-6654, pgneufe@gmail.com.

Claudia Thorn is seeking volunteers including a cookie coordinator, extra help for raffles/donations, and an understudy for salad prep. We're also seeking business sponsorships: \$100 for a business card-size advertisement in the program.

Next Soup Night committee meeting is April 30, 3 pm at the History Center.

## **Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report**

Minutes of the January 2019 General Meeting and the Treasurer's report will be available for review at the General Meeting. Account balances as of the end of February were: Checking - \$5,022; Savings - \$1,521; CDs - \$33,787; Total - \$40,331.

# Homes of Fair Oaks

Sally Dunbar

## **Jones Estate - Now the Governor's**

While the Old Homes article typically focuses on one of our historic homes built before 1920, this quarter's article will talk about our history-in-the making as Fair Oaks becomes the home of the Governor of California for the first time in history. December, 2018 Governor Gavin Newsom and family purchased their new home at 6740 Tobia Avenue, on 8 acres on the bluffs overlooking Sacramento Bar. While I am not in his inner circle, I have been pulled into his outer orbit by the fact he is now my neighbor 3 doors away! I thought I would share some of the history of his property, along with my own personal remembrances over the years.

I can only assume the Newsoms were attracted to the rolling oak-studded seclusion of the gated 8 acre Jones Estate, promising a private enclave for their 4 young children to have a sense of normalcy, far from the fishbowl of downtown Sacramento politics. It would be hard to find any other home in the area, with so much privacy. This begs the first question - how did there happen to be such a large beautiful home, close to downtown, on such a large acreage to even consider?



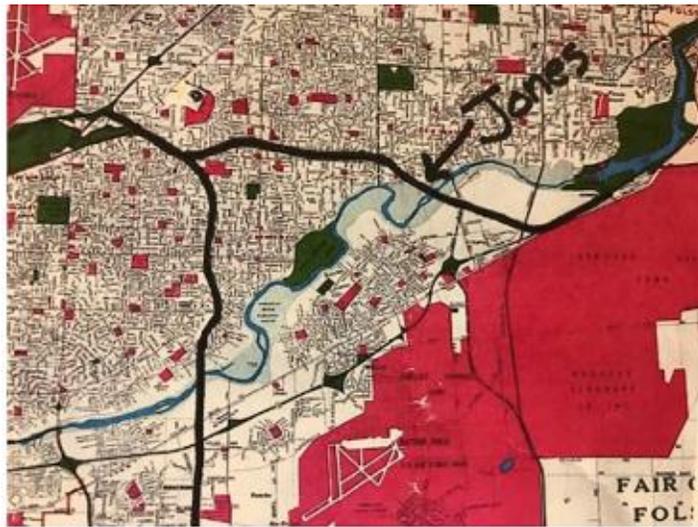
The gated entrance



The originally planned lots of the Southcliff Subdivision, with the current 8 acre Jones Estate lot outlined in red. View Court was never built.

A bit of history. The Southcliff neighborhood was formed in 1967 when the subdivision map was filed showing 62 lots. Previously the historic Kate Smith home, which I wrote about in October of 2018, had presided over the area - the grand dame of the neighborhood. At that time, the map shows View Court extending from the bend of Tobia, looping into the 8 acres, containing 10 of the 62 lots.

In the meantime, plans for a crosstown route connecting Route 80 with Route 50 in two locations had been on the books since 1964 - named Route 244. Originating at today's Auburn Blvd off ramp (can you picture how the 4 lane offramp from I80 simply stubs into Auburn Blvd?), the route would have split near Cypress with one leg extending across the river at Bradshaw, and the other continuing up Fair Oaks Blvd, crossing San Juan Ave, then angling across the (now) Bannister Park near the (now) Waldorf Campus, bisecting Sacramento Bar, and crossing the American River West of the Sunrise Bridge before connecting with Hwy 50. In preparation, in December of 1970, the State condemned the future governor's property, for "State Highway Purposes", reimbursing the owners of the effected lots \$129,000 according to recorded documents.



The proposed Route 244 would have extended through Fair Oaks across the Jones Estate, connecting with Route 50.

1970 and 1971 saw the first sales of the Southcliff subdivided lots, while the public debate over the crosstown route became rather heated as residents around town fought over the upcoming disruption of their neighborhoods. In a move that to this day is remembered as the best decision ever by some residents, and the worst blunder in local transportation history by others, the crosstown route was abandoned in 1975 - during Governor Jerry Brown's first term. In 1979 the 8 acres was sold at public auction. The transfer tax indicates the sales price was \$530,000. I have heard the two main bidders were local developer Robert Powell, and Vern and Gloria Jones - with the Jones emerging as the victors. Jones had been the sole owner of Exploration Logging (ExLog) (a well site geological service company with operations in 26 countries) when it merged with Baker/Hughes in 1972, with a large payout.

Over the next few years, construction began at the Jones estate, designed with 6 bedrooms, 7-1/2 bathrooms and over 12,000 square feet of Mediterranean elegance. My husband Dave and I were building our home up the street at the same time (significantly

smaller I might add) and frequently visited the site to see the latest progress. I had called the county building department once, and mentioning the Jones home, the clerk said it was the largest home he had ever seen come across his desk. At 12,000 square feet it was unusually massive for our area at the time. Today as well!

Vern was described at one point as a “drilling rig roughneck” which makes a memory Dave has of Vern Jones quite fitting. Dave wandered over to the Jones construction site at one point. Walking up the long driveway, he saw a number of men in a trench with picks and shovels. Looking further, one of them was Vern. They had discovered some underground piping, and Vern jumped right in to figure it out - shovel in hand.

Once they moved in, the Jones hosted their first large gathering - a wedding for their daughter, with valets running up and down the street as they parked their guests cars. The gardens were beautiful, with all floral plantings bursting with white flowers. The first few Halloweens I remember the gates were surprisingly opened with candle-lit luminaires lining the long driveway. At the door, a butler (was it a costume?) held a silver tray with treats. That was pretty spectacular.

For the next 35 years the Jones lived quietly in their beautiful estate home, with tennis courts, a pool and pool house, and acres of carefully groomed heritage oaks, although the events of 2003 snapped the neighbors to attention. The Bee reported that then Governor Swarzenegger was looking at “a home off of Southcliff Drive”, presumably contemplating a move for his family. It could only mean the Jones Estate. For the next few days television crews lined the streets of Southcliff Drive and Tobia Way with their cameras waiting to get the scoop. Subsequently, Swarzenegger never bought in the Sacramento area, and the trucks eventually left. But it was wild to think of our neighborhood as home to the Governor of the State! Little did we know.

As it turns out, that was not our neighborhood’s only political connection, however. Do you remember the incident that was brought up in Governor Mitt Romney’s Presidential run about him driving 12 hours from Massachusetts to Ontario with his dog, Seamus, in a crate on top of the car? It was tossed out as an example of his character in both his ‘08 and ‘12 campaign. The dog, Seamus, eventually came to live with Romney’s sister, Jane Romney Robinson, who lived on Tobia Way, 6 doors up the street from Newsom’s new home. (For the record - apparently Seamus loved riding on top of the car, according to the Robinsons.)

Time will tell how the Governor and his family’s move to Fair Oaks will impact our neighborhood, or our town. But one thing is certain. The history of Fair Oaks has taken a sharp turn as the new home of the Governor of California.

FAIR OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 2044  
FAIR OAKS CA 95628

**TO:**

Dues are for the Calendar Year, Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. Dues are payable on Jan. 1, and become delinquent Feb. 1.  
New members joining after Oct. 1 shall be considered paid for the following year.

Please check one:     NEW MEMBER APPLICATION                       DUES PAYMENT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership level requested:

Individual \$20       Family (2 Persons) \$25       Supporting (Business) \$50  
 Single Life Member \$150       Family Life Member \$225

I am adding \$5 and request a printed newsletter by USPS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am including the following donation to support the History Center:

Contributor \$100       Supporter \$250       Patron \$500

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check number \_\_\_\_\_ Date of check \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Please mail this form and check payable to:

“Fair Oaks Historical Society, Inc.” P.O. BOX 2044, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

For more information, please call Jim Pearce, 961-8415 (jpearce4104@gmail.com)