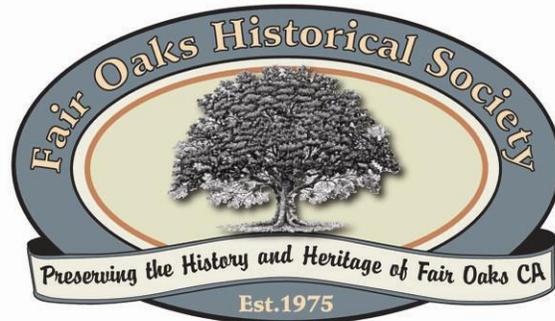


# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

*Newsletter – January 2016*

Issue Number 116



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

## **QUARTERLY POTLUCK & GENERAL MEETING**

**6 p.m., Tuesday, January 26, 2016**

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

7997 California Avenue

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

## **California, The Mexican-American War to Statehood**

**Steve Beck**

History and Education Programs Lead, Sutter's Fort State Historic Park

### **Editor's Note**

**Ralph Carhart**

I'm pleased to assume the duties of editing and producing the Fair Oaks Historical Society's quarterly newsletter. As we enter our fortieth year preserving local history and informing residents and others about the people, activities, places and events that have shaped Fair Oaks unique identity, we look forward to growing our membership, providing interesting quarterly meetings and continuing to enhance our History Center, our online resources and our newsletter.

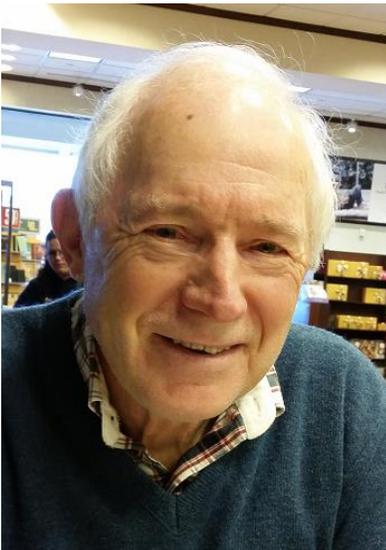
We thank past President Joe Dobrowolski for his hard work these past several years, not only for serving as the Society's president, but also for doubling as newsletter editor. Thanks Joe!

I personally want to thank Jim Pearce for his generous assistance in helping me in multiple ways with producing and mailing this newsletter. Jim is an amazing resource to the Society— just check out our website to see one aspect of his work.

Lastly, I thank the officers and committee chairs for providing the content for this newsletter, with special recognition to Sally Dunbar for her "Old Homes of Fair Oaks" work. Now— a word from our new leader:

## **President's Message**

**Frank Wolfe**



Thank you for the honor and trust in selecting me as your new president. And, thank you, Joe, for your able leadership as president, and for providing the helping, guiding hand that is always there.

While relatively new to the Fair Oaks Historical Society, I studied history in school and remain a member of my hometown Pine Grove, Pennsylvania, Historical Society.

I was born in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and by age 6, I and my three siblings were living on our parents 100-acre farm near Pine Grove. We had no electricity, no running water or indoor plumbing and no telephone. My father also worked rotating shifts at Bethlehem Steel in Lebanon, and a car was not always available. Today with my computer and smart phone at my side, that life seems far away. I retired from my last sales job in 2001. Married 50 years, my wife Judy (who now lives in an Alzheimer's care facility) and I have two sons and four grandchildren.

What I have learned in my seventy five years is that a successful operation depends upon the people who actively volunteer to lead and handle the many tasks involved. My observation of our people involved in Soup Night, It's My Park Day, the Christmas in the Village booth, the History Center, and the quarterly meetings— among other things— shows me that our members know what has to be done and they do it well. I recently met with Ron Lingren and Jim Pearce to discuss programs for this year and I have followed the Soup Night committee's work on their follow-up and thank you notes. I feel confident that as we go forward we have the support and enthusiasm to achieve our goals.

My goals include:

- Having strong turnouts to our quarterly potluck meetings. Our food is excellent, our programs are well planned and interesting, we have fun, and we keep business brief.
- Starting an “Get One New Member” campaign, where each member works on recruiting at least one new member to the Society and one new recruit to help on a project.
- Getting dues paid up promptly to make the job easier for our treasurer and membership committee.
- Getting more volunteers to assist in keeping the History Center open to the public.

## **Past President’s Message**

**Joe Dobrowolski**

The last few years have seen the Fair Oaks Historical Society and its History Center grow. Many people have stepped up to achieve this success. The Soup Night Committee, our officers, ad hoc committees such as the Building & Repair Committee, the Dress and Hat Display Committee, the Technology Committee, and many others have done a wonderful job.

This year I was glad to see our nominating committee reach out and recruit new people to work for the Society. Thank you and good luck to our new officers and committee chairs.

We should all be proud that we have great potluck quarterly meetings, one of the best small History Centers and a community highlight— Soup Night— which has again raised more money than in prior years.

In this new year we should all be working to bring new members to our meetings. I’m looking forward to another great year for the Fair Oaks Historical Society and I know we’ll see great and interesting things happening under our new leadership.

## **What’s happening...**

**Jim Pearce**

*At the membership committee*— January is membership renewal month. The Membership Committee (Jim Pearce, Ralph Carhart, Bob Vogel and Terrie O’Donnell) is working on updating the roster, mailing lists, application form and badges, and we are hoping to have everything done by the end of January.

Be sure to update your information on the form on the back page of this newsletter, mail it in or bring it with you to the January meeting. To check your dues status, we’ve put a hidden file on the website: [www.fairoakshistory.org/webdue.pdf](http://www.fairoakshistory.org/webdue.pdf). If any information is not correct, contact Jim Pearce at 961-8415 or [webhost@fairoakshistory.org](mailto:webhost@fairoakshistory.org)

*At the History Center*– Our Christmas Open House was held in conjunction with the Fair Oaks Christmas in the Village event. It was Ashton Smith’s last day working as docent. He’s moving with his family to Redding and will be sorely missed. While we’re considering a replacement, the History Center will only be open Saturday’s from 10 am to 4 pm.



*On the website*– Be sure to check the “What’s New” section on the home page from time to time. We’re continuously adding material to the website and that’s where you’ll find it for several months before we move it to a new location. I just talked to a member who hadn’t noticed our Google Old Homes of Fair Oaks app. We have over 100 old Fair Oaks homes mapped with photos and descriptions.

## **Ninth Annual Soup Night Recap**

**Claudia Thorn, Chair**

A tremendous thanks to everyone who volunteered in the planning, preparation and execution of our Ninth Annual Soup Night. We especially appreciate those who supported our efforts by attending this event. We hope you enjoyed the evening and the wonderful soups. This important event provides the funds necessary to operate the Fair Oaks History Center, and this year’s event was our most successful and profitable yet, netting \$8,783.60.



Among those recognized for their efforts:

**Lynn Steen** - Soup Chair

**Sue DeHart, Jeanne Rodgers & Jeanne Maloney** - Soup Chefs

**Jo Russler & Carol Crowthers** - Salad Chefs

**Bob & Pat Vogel** - Wine Donations

**Janet & Warren McWilliams** - Bread & License

**Sallie Miller** - Cookies

**Ron and Franca Lingren** - Coffee & Biscotti

**Marilyn Pearce** - Bowl distribution (*Marilyn is retiring, so we need a replacement.*)

**Trude Vasquez** - Publicity, Silent Auction & Raffle

**Terrie O'Donnell & Janet McWilliams** - Raffle Assistants

**Nancy White** - Supplies, Signs and Room Set-up (*Bobbi Salzman agreed to take over this job.*)

**Marilyn Pearce & Janet McWilliams** - Centerpieces

**Eleanor Brown & Vittoria Soldano** - Volunteers

**Bob Vogel & Claudia Thorn** - Tickets

**Vicki Walter** - Program

**Bob Vogel** - Accounting

**Ralph Carhart, Bob & Maria Brugger** - Cleanup

**Glen & Carol Crowthers, John & Lillian Jones** - Kitchen Cleanup

Special thanks to **Don Yost** for the beautiful bowls he makes for us. If you like his work, his pottery sells at the Barbecue Pro in the Village.

If you'd like to join our committee we need volunteers to coordinate bowl distribution, help with signage and handle supply purchases.

And, please let us know which soups you liked, share your recipes with us for next year and let us know of any suggestions you may have.



***The Tenth Annual Soup Night will be Friday, November 4, 2016.***

## **Board Meeting Highlights, December 8, 2015**

**Vicki Walter, Board Secretary**

The newly-elected officers and standing committee chairs were acknowledged. Some vacancies are yet to be filled. *(Please let the president know if you are interested in any vacant position.)*

### Officers:

President - **Frank Wolfe**

Immediate Past President – **Joe Dobrowolski**

Vice President - **Ron Lingren**

Secretary - **Vicki Walter**

Treasurer - **Bob Vogel**

### Standing Committee Chairs:

Dinner - **Warren & Judy Blomquist**

Program - **Ron Lingren**

Membership – **Jim Pearce**

Newsletter Editor - **Ralph Carhart**

Ways and Means - **Bob & Pat Vogel** (wine); **Maria Brugger & Dorothy Cabodi** (raffle)

Liaison Representative - **Ken Steen**

Soup Night – **Claudia Thorn & Trude Vasquez**

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District Liaison – **Claudia Thorn**

Publicity – vacant

Technology - vacant

History Center Operations - vacant

History Center Preservation - vacant

Historical - vacant

Ashton Smith, our docent for the History Center has moved. We are looking for a replacement. In the interim we are seeking volunteers to work two-hour shifts on Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## **Treasurer's Report**

**Bob Vogel**

As of the end of 2015 we have completed all major repairs to the History Center, including a new paint job (\$990). For 2016 we plan to install a new sign at the History Center (estimated cost: \$500). As of November 31, 2015, our 2015 expenditures exceeded 2015 revenues by \$1,271. The Treasurer, with the Board's assistance, is currently preparing the proposed 2016 budget.

Our total bank account balance as of November 31, 2015 was \$39,911.08. That total includes \$8,398.32 in checking and \$31,512.76 in savings.

A detailed Treasurer's Report for 2015 will be posted at the January General Meeting.

## Old Homes of Fair Oaks

Sally Dunbar

### **Johnston House - 7956 California Ave**

Rarely are we given a window into the original interior colors of our historic Fair Oaks homes. Unfortunately Kodachrome was not in use until the 1930s! A news article from 1906 sheds light on how this month's Old Home was decorated - a fun find given its current decor.

As background, the Johnston House (or the California House, as its sign says) was built in 1906 on the knoll southwest of the main intersection of town, above today's Home-2-Roost. James R. Johnston was a retired dry goods dealer from Rock Island, Illinois who came to Fair Oaks at age 82 to improve his health. It must have worked as he lived to be



92. Presumably Johnston followed his daughter Rebecca, who was married to Frances Murphy, builder of the 1901 Murphy Building, one of the first commercial buildings of Fair Oaks. The Johnston family retained ownership of the house until after 1930.

In July 1906 *the Sacramento Union* ran a feature article on the home proclaiming “This cottage has a suggestion of the colonial style, yet

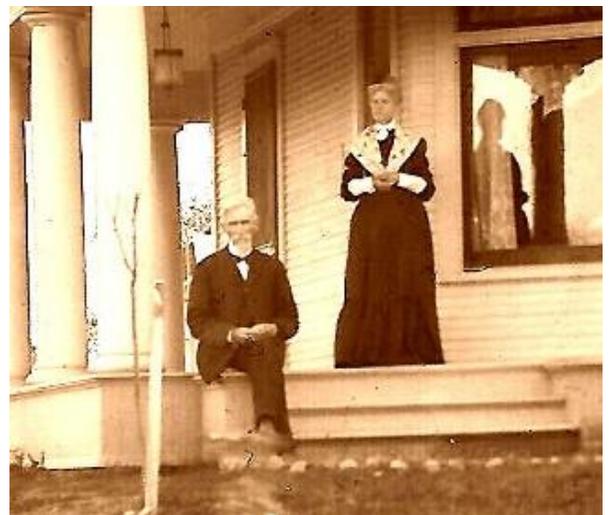
with that blending of modern architecture that reveals the taste of the builder and gives emphasis to the attractive points of the natural scenery... The prevailing color is green in the finishing and furnishings, so blended that it shows the design to supplement the gray of summer with suggestions of green grass.”

While originally built as a personal residence, the Johnston House was converted into office and retail space sometime after 1960, and has housed a variety of businesses, including a lawyer's office, photography studio, advertising agency, Catholic radio station, Jeannie's Place gift shop, and it's current tenant, Ameriprise Financial Services.



The current owner, Jon Heim, purchased the house in 1993 from Steve Bacon, and has updated the entire structure while keeping the historical flavor. The structure has remained pretty true to its original design with only the east side entry having been expanded into an enclosed porch, eliminating 5 original columns. Heim updated the existing knob and tube wiring, but kept the charming pushbutton switch plates intact. While the doors and window frames remain original, the floor was in poor shape. As Heim installed sturdy new laminate floors, he was careful to float them over the original flooring, in case a future owner wants to do a true historical restoration - the original floor is still there. As he has worked on the home he has kept all period pieces stored safely in the basement. "The main thing I was not able to find were the pillars from the East side of the original home. I am hoping I get a call one day that someone has them!"

As Heim gave us a tour recently of his two-story renovation, I smiled at the color of the carpeting in the finished attic. It's green! Some things have a way of coming full circle.



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

**TO:**

Dues are for the Calendar Year, January 1 to December 31.  
Dues are payable on January 1, and become delinquent February 1.  
Those joining after October 1 shall be considered paid for the following year.

**Please check one:**

NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

DUES PAYMENT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Membership dues are:**

*Individual \$15*

*Family (2 Persons) \$20*

*Single Life Member \$150*

*Family Life Member \$225*

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)