



# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

**Newsletter – October 2014 # 111**

**MEETING, Tuesday October 28 6:00**

**At the Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse 7997 California Avenue**

**POT LUCK MEETING Dinner line forms at 6:30**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Joe Dobrowolski**

- The July Meeting had another nice pot luck. The presentation by Sacramento Librarian and Author James Scott was a riveting tale of Sacramento history. I rated it as among the best ever presentations.
- The History Center continues to be open 3 days a week, Fri – Sun, from 10:00AM to 4:00PM
- Jim Pearce has started to revise the displays. Stop by and see some new items. The electronic display is especially interesting
- The Society moved our banking affiliation to the new bank in town - Sierra Vista Bank.
- The chair of the Sunshine Comm. is Jean Applegate, [jeanapplgate@att.net](mailto:jeanapplgate@att.net), or 853-9021.  
Contact Jean if a member is ill, house bound or in the need of a cheer up card.

**HISTORY MINUTE** I hope that all of you are enjoying the personal recollections, historical experiences, and remembrances of Fair Oaks. Janet McWilliams and Lois Frazier gave us their sometimes funny experiences of swimming in the American river. This month a person who moved to Fair Oaks in 1943 will share his experiences in Fair Oaks .

## **PRESENTATIONS Trude Vasquez**

Our presenter this month is Dave Brubaker a docent from Sutters Fort who will talk about fur trading in early California. It will be an interesting and exciting talk. At our January meeting we are scheduled to have the docents from the Governor's Mansion who will come in period dress to talk about California's governors. Two historical and interesting appearances

## **HISTORY CENTER DISPLAYS Jim Pearce**

At the July General Meeting, I volunteered to take on the displays job at the History Center. Since then, I've talked to many of you and there is general agreement that we should bring in new exhibits every year or so. There were also suggestions that we make the History Center more interactive.

With the Board's approval, I purchased an All-in-One touch screen computer (pictured) which will run our historic photos as a slide show, the presentations we've developed and will develop more of, parts of our website, and other applications we'll add to the display. There are security issues – screen protection, physical security of the unit, theft, etc. and we are working on those.

We are having three new storyboards made on the history of the south side of the river "Grapes to Gold", "Gold to Gravel", and "Gravel to Gold River". We're in production on the first one. The three will replace some of the Water District storyboards.

Other suggestions are to have a newspaper rack with some of our duplicate old newspapers out for visitors to leaf through, simpler-to-replace storyboards or mounts and gadgets that visitors can touch and operate.

We've set a goal of November 1 to have most of this done. If you have any other suggestions for improvement, let me know.



*Jim At The Controls*

## **SOUP NIGHT IS COMING Friday November 7th Claudia Thorn**

**And we still need raffle items!** Do you know someone who has a cabin or house they are willing to donate for this event? Bring all your raffle items to the Oct 28 potluck or contact Trude at 966-5499. There will be a few improvements this year.

First, the raffle items will be set up in the Fireside room giving us more space in the main area. Second, Pete Schroeder has agreed to be our auctioneer for our live auction. Third, our student volunteers will serve salads and desserts at the table.

We will continue to sell wine by the glass or bottle. If you wish to donate wine for this event please contact Bob or Pat Vogel, 966-9703. And the Lingrens will again sponsor the Vanelli coffee and biscotti. We will also serve decaffeinated coffee in our big urn.

We will be serving 5 soups. And coming back by popular demand, *Dianda's has agreed to donate* their Clam Chowder soup. The other 4 soups we are considering are: Navy bean with ham, Chicken tortilla, Borsch (vegan) and Beef barley. As we did last year, the students will be serving soup, waiting on the tables and helping with clean-up. Lynn Steen is coordinating the soups committee. If you would like to assist with soup preparation, please contact Lynn, 967-7135.

Our clean-up committee is co-chaired by Merina West and Ralph Carhart. We have about 5 volunteers so far, plus some students. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at 961-8291.

As you know our event is SOLD OUT. If you are not able to attend please contact me as well I have a waiting list. If you still want a ticket you can contact me.

I wish to thank all the members of the Soup Committee who are diligently working to make this the best soup night ever.

## ***Raffle donations are needed for the Oct. Meeting & Soup Night***

***Lets make the raffle something people want to stay for...***

Call Trude Vasquez at 916-966-5499 or Claudia Thorn at 916-961-8291

**NEWSLETTER** We like to deliver the newsletter by email. If you still get the newsletter by US mail please add \$5.00 to the annual membership dues.

## **California's Drought - Then And Now by Ashton Smith**



Currently, California residents are experiencing a terrible drought, one that is reminiscent of the 1970s drought, and one that echoes back to an earlier time, in the years of 1903 and 1904. That drought was responsible for killing off masses of livestock and costing numerous residents their livelihoods. John E Holst, an original 1895 Fair Oaks resident recalled that "In 1903, only about half of the normal rainfall fell in Northern California. In 1904, the rainfall measured only about 8 inches in the northern part of the state-which is perhaps one-fourth of normal". He goes on to say that the livestock in the southern part of the state suffered the most, considering that in

1904, Southern California received less than two inches of rain. Numerous animals had to be destroyed because their water and hay needs were unavailable. However, some of the more prosperous cattle owners moved their cattle by train to vigorous ground in nearby states. Holst explained that in Fair Oaks, well water was becoming scarce at this time and finally disappeared, forcing people to transport river water by horse to their homes and ranches. He also describes the sight of the American River as "just a small trickle of water going down the middle of the American River bed" and the Sacramento river as having no downstream movement, and being affected by the Pacific ocean tides so much that floating debris could be seen moving upstream. In a time of such misfortune, Fair Oaks residents worked hard and kept water use down to the absolute minimum. In the end, Fair Oaks survived the drought, and at this time, we must possess the same kind of conservation attitude toward water use, just as the early residents did.

## **SLOCUM - GORE GENERAL STORE 7986 and 7988 California Avenue** by Old Homes Editor, Sally Dunbar

You no doubt have heard the skill saws and crow bars as the wood siding was recently pried off the facade of the Slocum & Gore Building at 7988 and 7986 California Ave - home of Regent Street Salon and the upcoming Fair Oaks Brew Pub. The Brew Pub will be opening soon, next to the Slocum House across from the theater. As prep for their newest tenant, owners Rich and Jayne Schmitt restored the building's facade to its historic look, unexpectedly exposing a carved date of 1909 atop the structure, and a previously hidden beautiful leaded glass window.



Housing the Slocum - Gore General Store, the original two story building (the building on the left in the picture) was built about 1902 by early entrepreneurs Charles Slocum and William Gore - partners in a lumber business on Main St, and also

partners in the first bank next door to the General Store. While the original business district had previously centered on Main Street, muddy winter slopes spurred the relocation of the business core to the current central Village area. The wood framed Slocum - Gore building became the second store in the new area, after the Murphy Building.

Slocum and Gore operated the store and butcher shop until 1908, when John Holst purchased the business, with Gore retaining ownership of the building. Unfortunately, in September 1909 fire destroyed the store and adjoining bank building. By year's end, a new one story concrete block building arose, with the etched date 1909 embellishing the top. Between 1940 and 1957 wood siding was added to the top, no doubt to "modernize" the building. The building was also divided into two shop spaces - East and West.

Through the years, the building has housed a variety of businesses. After John Holst's General Store, Beauchamp's Pool Hall occupied in the 1920's. Rexall Drug Store and Kellam's Department Store (dry goods, hardware and clothing) continued the retail tradition. In the 50's Martin Wood owned the building, with his Optometry business. In 1957 the Applegates took ownership, with Dr. David Applegate moving into the East half, running his family medical practice until 1980. Bob Scott occupied the east half for the next 25 or so years, as medical offices.

During the 1950s, the West side housed Fair Oaks Pharmacy. In the mid 60's The Fair Oaks Music Center moved in, offering musical instruction and sales. The Village Green Gift Shop followed, then Cooper-Abels Insurance in 1975, who discovered the old store safe hidden in the walls after removing wall covering. (It was empty, by the way, and is still there!) After losing the next tenant, the Applegates were happy to rent to Trish of Regent Street Salon, who has stayed the past 30 years. The Schmitt's took ownership in 2004.



This Fall, Fair Oaks Brew Pub opens, with an expanded outdoor dining patio overlooking the gardens of the original Slocum House Restaurant, and brewing facilities in the basement. With the new exposed block exterior, the uncovered leaded glass window, and punchy tan & black paint, the building stands as a proud reminder of the earliest days of Fair Oaks, and of the many

entrepreneurs who have helped make the fabric of Fair Oaks the crazy quilt that it is.

## **UPDATE ON THE DAVIS HOME Jim Pearce**

Development of the old Davis Ranch property (see last month's newsletter) continues. On September 10, the old home on the property was demolished and the rubble carted away. Most of the orchards are being cleared. The developer plans to transplant the palm trees that lined the driveway to a new street that will connect Pollard Avenue and Fair Oaks Blvd.

The developer wouldn't let us on the property while the demolition was taking place, but we asked the Superintendent, Gary Ginther, if he would take some photos for our files. Thanks Gary. What a beast of a machine! Reminds me of T-Rex in Jurassic Park.



## **HELP !!!!!!!!!!!**

**Needed** - Someone to **supervise** the care of the History Center foliage.

**Needed** - Someone to take on as editor of the newsletter.

### **To Volunteer**

**CALL ME 961-6561 or  
email [joedobro@pacbell.net](mailto:joedobro@pacbell.net)**

**Patronize** those who support the Society

**Dianda's Italian Bakery**

**Acacia Salon**, Sharon Loken

**Village Bistro**

**Prepared** by Joe Dobrowolski,  
FOHS President & Editor  
**Contact me if your membership infor  
or an item in the newsletter is in error**

To reach me use:  
the US mail address on the front or  
email me at [joesextra@pacbell.net](mailto:joesextra@pacbell.net)

## History Center at the Chicken Festival

Marilyn Pearce organized a group of FOHS members to sit outside the History Center and entice passers-by to come into the History Center. Meg Smart, Lois Frazier, Lynn Steen, Judy Blomquist and Jean Applegate did us fine. Our old friend Jim Racey, pictured with all the women – could you expect less from Jim, was among the many people who stopped in to view the Center. Many small appropriate items were displayed so kids could make a choice to take home FREE

