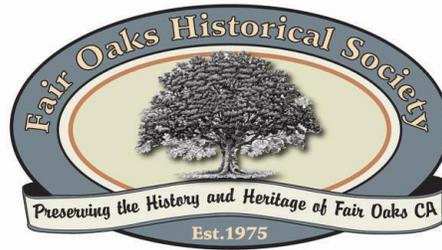


# *Fair Oaks Historical Society*

*Newsletter – April 2018*

Issue Number 125

Ralph Carhart, Editor



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

## **QUARTERLY POTLUCK & GENERAL MEETING**

**6 p.m., Tuesday, April 24, 2018**

Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse

7997 California Avenue

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

## **“American Theater Organ Society, Sierra Branch”**

**Our Organization (Pun intended) and a Demonstration**

### **President’s Message**

**Jim Pearce**

In the 14 years that I’ve been a member of the Fair Oaks Historical Society, I’ve deftly avoided any political responsibilities and, instead, focused on technical and educational support. But, now that Frank has done such an exceptional job of nurturing the organization and its 250 members, it’s an opportune time for me to step into the presidency.

The main thing that prompts me to step up to the plate is the fine people who volunteer for the many jobs that are necessary to keep the Society running. So, my first message is to recognize a few of you. You deserve a big hand!



Here (L to R) are our new officers, being inducted at the January meeting:

- Pat Neufeld**, Secretary
- Bob Vogel**, Treasurer
- Jim Pearce**, President
- Ron Lingren**, Vice President
- Frank Wolfe**, Past President (seated)

Below, are our committee chairs and others who do so much work for our operations and events:



**Warren and Judy Blomquist**, host and hostess (setup, cleanup and everything between) for our great potluck dinners.



Past President **Frank Wolfe** and **Pat Vogel**. Pat is Ways & Means Chair, Society Sommelier, and our representative to community organizations.



**Claudia Thorn**, manager of our huge fund raiser, Soup Night, and all of her volunteers who, in one night, put about \$9,000 in our coffers. (That money keeps the Fair Oaks History Center operating.)

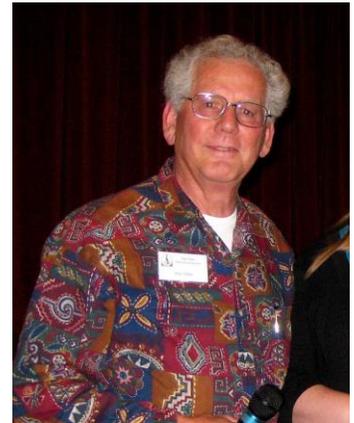


**Bob Sours**, History Center Docent and **Terrie O'Donnell**, Membership Chair.

**Ralph Carhart**,  
Newsletter Editor  
and a Past President

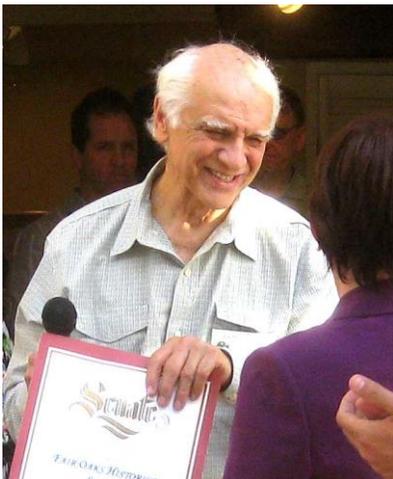


**Ken Steen**, History  
Consortium Liaison  
and a Past President



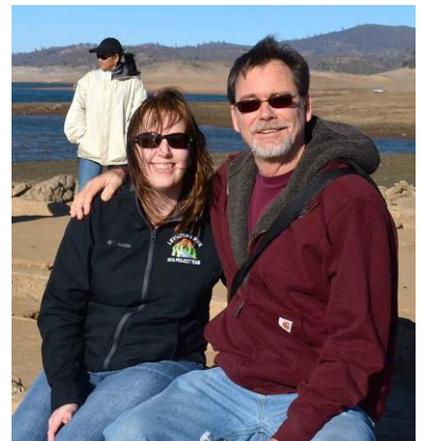
**Marilyn Pearce** and **Bob Brugger**,  
official greeters.

**Lynn Steen**, liaison to  
other organizations, with **Trude Vasquez** and  
**Janet McWilliams**, omnipresent helpers  
wherever needed.



**Joe Dobrowolski**, History Center  
Facilities Manager and a Past  
President

**Wendy Key**, Publicity



## April 24th Program Ron Lingren, Vice-President

If you missed the last meeting: Elena Smith, a young energetic librarian from the California State Library discussed the types of information available in the California History Room. This includes the Fair Oaks' archives, museums and repositories. She provided an overview of the California History Room at the California State Library, its collections, and more! If you are curious about the history of Californian in general and specifically Fair Oaks then a visit to the California State History Library might be your next stop.

What to expect at the April meeting: For those of you who missed Silent Movie Night in January, you might get a performance on the organ that lives backstage at the Community Clubhouse, and is maintained by the Sierra Branch of the American Theater Organ Society. Our speaker at the April 24th General Meeting will be a representative from the Society who will tell us all about the organization. They've promised us a speaker and a player, so it should be entertaining.

## Photos from our January General Meeting:



## What's happening...

### *At the History Center...*

See what's on sale at the History Center: mugs, historical photographs, books, maps and more. Drop by and pick up a treat for yourself or a great gift for someone else. You'll notice a new sign on the gifts display. You can now pay with any major credit card. Bob Sours will use our new chip/slide card reader to process your purchase. We're finally moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!



### *On our website...*

History Center staff (Wendy Key, Bob Sours and Jim Pearce) put in a big effort to finish the on-line Fair Oaks Waking tour in time for our upcoming General Meeting. We talked about this at the January meeting and in the newsletter, but now we're proud to announce it's done and up on the Internet. Find it on our home page.

There are four walking loops— Main Street to the old bridge; the History Center to the old church and back, the Village, and the Fair Oaks Cemetery. Each loop has photos and narrative of families and buildings, so we provide much more content than our old walking tour brochures. Thanks to Hugh Gorman for providing the artwork. We'll be making edits to the tours from time to time, so if you have any suggestions let us know.

We're also increasing our activity on the Fair Oaks Historical Society Facebook page, managed from afar by our loyal member, Merina West (of Straith House fame). We've been posting historical Fair Oaks questions and answers, and will be advertising our meetings and events there.

### *Around town:*

Jim Pearce gave a talk to the Women's Thursday Club at their February meeting. The topic was the Smith Family (N.R., Leland and Robert). See the January newsletter for more details on the Smith family and their home.



### ***For Sale:***

While visiting the owners of the Levering house in preparation for this month's old homes article, we noticed a small pedal powered organ. They have two of them and wondered if any of the Historical Society members would be interested in buying the one that has worn out bellows on the pedals. I believe they're willing to accept a best offer to move this one along. Contact Marsha Marchand (FOHSMember) [marshamarchand@gmail.com](mailto:marshamarchand@gmail.com)



### **Memorial Book...**

A contribution to the Fair Oaks Historical Society is a very special way to remember those who have passed away or to honor someone for a special event or tribute. The names of those remembered or honored (stating the special event or tribute) are printed in the Memorial and Honor Book which is on permanent display at the History Center.

Recognition of each contribution also will be printed in the newsletter. The amount of the contribution will not be printed in the book or the newsletter.

You can download the recognition/contribution form from our website or pick one up at at the History Center or at the quarterly general meeting. You can also contact Jim Pearce (916-961-8415 or [jpearce4104@gmail.com](mailto:jpearce4104@gmail.com)) for the form or for assistance.

### **Membership Reminder**

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, we urge you to continue your support of the Fair Oaks Historical Society and the Fair Oaks History Center. You can check your current status on our website ([www.fairoakshistory.org](http://www.fairoakshistory.org)). On the top of the home page we've highlighted the "Join, Renew, Donate" link. We've also created a credit card link so you can renew from home. You can still renew at the History Center, at the General Meeting or by mail—but do renew. In May we'll be culling the membership list of those who we haven't heard from in two years. We want you to stay, participate in our programs and events, and continue to receive this newsletter.

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

Minutes of the March 28, 2017 Board meeting the January 25, 2018 General Meeting and the detailed Treasurer's report will be available for your review at the General Meeting. Account balances as of the end of February were: Checking - \$6,689; Savings - \$1,520; CDs - \$8,064 and \$25,454; Total - \$41,727

## **It's My Park Day** **Saturday, May 12, 2018**

"It's My Park Day" is here again—the day our Park District asks us, as community partners, to help in the upkeep of our local parks. This year the event will be at Phoenix Park on Saturday, May 12 from 8am to noon. Our participation helps us keep our "A" rating as a partner with the District and affords us better rental rates. Work may entail mulching, painting, planting, cleaning or minor repairs. All participants get a free tee shirt and are treated to a thank you lunch.

Please sign up at our April General Meeting or call the Park District at 916-966-1036 and let them know you will be representing the Historical Society

## **Soup Night 2018**

Soup Night will be coming around again before you know it—  
Friday, November 2, 2018.

This is our primary way of funding the operation and enhancement of our History Center.

Volunteer now for any of the many tasks involved in planning and accomplishing this important event. Contact Claudia Thorn to sign up.



We also need quality donations for raffles and auctions. Remember, the more and better items or services you can round up, the better we can fund the operations and improvements to our wonderful History Center.

# Old Homes of Fair Oaks

Sally Dunbar

## The Levering Home, 7881 Orange Avenue



Frequently you hear the saying “If these walls could talk”. We heard the saying last week as the owner of the Levering House at 7881 Orange Ave talked about his home during his 31 years of ownership. A man with a huge heart, Doug Porter has tried to help those in need by renting out rooms in his 2-story home to those struggling to make ends meet. The cast of characters who have come and gone could populate a movie, he says. Over the years, Doug has tried to maintain the historic feel to the home through many remodeling projects, although a fire in the living room a few years back forced some modernization he had not counted on. The firefighters smashed through the coved plaster ceiling to chase the burning embers, and windows and flooring needed to be replaced. He has also added bathrooms, but the original 2nd story “Juliette Balcony” is still the focal piece of the grand home, and the best place to enjoy the pastoral view and the nightly delta breezes of Fair Oaks, according to his wife, Marsha.

The Levering Home has an interesting story of its own to tell. As the Fair Oaks Colony gained the attention of Eastern investors, ten acres (lots 1 and 6— each five acres— stretching from Orange to Olive Streets, (west of Pennsylvania) came into the hands of T.O. and Maria Berg of the Village of Lee, Illinois, in early 1900, and soon transferred to Mary Miller, also of Village of Lee. The 1901 deed from Mary to Phillip and Emma Schoenholtz states the transfer is “a gift for kindness board and care given during the last sickness” and in exchange for her funeral expenses. Presumably the Shoeholtz never even saw the land.

In May of 1902 our Charles D. “Charley” Levering becomes the owner of the ten acres. Charley grew up in Polk County, Iowa, where his parents farmed. He worked in the

lumber business for a few years, and by age 28 bought 160 acres in Omega OK, raising purebred Poland China hogs and other livestock. His marriage at age 32 brought him a bride with health challenges, encouraging Charley to move west, purchasing the ten acres in healthful Fair Oaks to build his new home, in addition to another 25-acre parcel.

Charley chose a beautiful spot to build what would be called “one of the finest homes in the district, a two-story frame building fitted with every modern convenience, arranged so as to reflect the refined tastes of its owners. The attractive appearance of the house is heightened through its excellent location on a well chosen natural building site, which affords a fine view of the entire settlement.” He moved his family to the home in 1905, and developed his acreage with orange and almonds. Charley invested in the first Fair Oaks Bank, and sat on its Board of Directors, as well as that of the Fair Oaks Fruit Company. In 1921, at 60 years of age, Charley sold his home and other holdings in the area, and moved to the Los Angeles area, where his occupation was listed as “Keeper of Bees”.

Charley’s sale was to Charles F. Walsh, a teacher, who retained ownership for 19 years, from 1921 to 1940. Walsh had 2 children— son Houston and daughter Doreene. One of our Society’s members was in Houston’s high school graduating class in 1940, and remembers swimming in the Walsh swimming pool, believed to be the first pool in Fair Oaks. The pool is still visible on the property, although a “tad dated”, and not very swimmable.

In 1940 the Levering home became owned by the OJ Porter family. OJ, along with his sister and brother, had a civil engineering firm, with a testing lab near Sac State. Over the ensuing years, the family subdivided and sold off acreage, eventually giving Doug’s Aunt Verle Lovell the current home on .61 acres in exchange for her contribution to the company. In 1987, Aunt Verle sold the home to Doug, who has owned it ever since.



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)