



The Society Page

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Gilroy Historical Society

June, 2020

A Hearty Hello and A Fond Farewell

Three cheers for our new Museum Managers, **Susan Voss** and **Joe Robinson**! The Society is thrilled to reach our goal of hiring a half time manager for the Gilroy Museum. We believe this will ensure the continuance of the Museum which the City was threatening to close during the financial crisis of 2008. And we couldn't think of better employees or a more important time to do this!

Tom Howard has been the de facto leader/manager of the Gilroy Museum since 2009, after being laid off as a part time employee for at least eight years prior to that. We will certainly miss his all-encompassing knowledge as well as he himself. He has promised to help his successors get off to a great start. Read more later in this issue...



Susan Voss, Tom Howard, Mark McPherson and Joe Robinson – photo by Phill Laursen



Tom Howard and the Proclamation he received from the City on March 2nd. Photos by **Phill Laursen**

Dues Are Due by June 30th

Last year we changed our dues renewal system to having them all come due at the same time. And that time is NOW! Previously it was hard for members (and ourselves!) to keep track of when their dues were due. We hope this is easier for everyone, and included an envelope with our mailed newsletters for our subscribers' convenience.

Please also be sure to update your information and give us your email address. We are really hoping to be able to send out interim email updates so you have more timely information about the Society.

THE MUSEUM DURING COVID 19

In our last Society Page, we were all gearing up for the City's 150th birthday celebration on March 12th. And then the rug was pulled out from under us by COVID 19. Literally it felt like that, as the Shelter in Place was implemented so quickly on very short notice. Instead of celebrating at Old City Hall with the Chamber of Commerce on the evening of March 12th, the museum was closed that day. All the festivities for the Family Day Celebration on March 14th were abruptly cancelled. It seemed like all the work done at the Museum in preparation for the event had been for nothing! **Susan Voss** and **Cathy Mirelez** had spent days preparing a

huge special exhibit depicting our first 150 years. **Robyn Houts** has spent two years completing our new Amah Mutsun exhibit. The Museum was unable to greet guests, show off the new exhibits, engage visitors with the Downtown Quiz, etc. Even our lovely new 150 banners (like the ones on the downtown light poles) printed and donated by **Richard Young** have not been hung. Disappointing is an understatement! Hopefully we will get to hold the celebration in the fall.

Unfortunately, our wonderful new employees did not even get to begin! Since the first of the year your Board has been writing the Museum Manager job description, posting it on several job sites, interviewing five candidates, selecting two, arranging for payroll, worker's compensation insurance, etc. etc. Two of the candidates were clearly at the top of the rankings. By mutual consent they agreed to share the 20-hour position with Susan working about 14 hours/week and Joe six hours. This will be a great benefit when they start working as it will enable the other partner to assume responsibility if one is sick or on vacation. Re-opening the Museum will depend on when the City allows it since the building belongs to the City. Susan and Joe are already planning on a deep cleaning and are excited about several projects.

Fortunately for the Museum, Tom's move to Petaluma has also been delayed by COVID 19. We hope that he will be able to overlap with Susan and Joe to work with them. Susan and Joe have been volunteers for the past year and will be able to hit the ground running. Susan was actually the city staff member in charge of the Museum for several years prior to being laid off in January, 2009.

Our Successful Bowl-A-Thon

By Linda White

This year we decided to change the date for our annual Bowlathon from the last to the first Saturday in March. Turned out to be a good thing since the Pandemic would have prevented it from happening later!

We had 32 paid entries (our highest yet) as well as a record number of prizes donated. Old City Hall, Nob Hill Foods, Royal Nails, Lowe's, Bozzo 76 Service, Westside Grill, Café 152, Gilroy Bowl, Gilroy Golf Course, Tristan's Cookies, House of Bagels, Hecker Pass Winery, Pinocchio's Pizza, Straw Hat Pizza, Melissa Peterson, and members Dave Matuszak and Linda White all contributed items.

Margene Peterson and **Maureen Hughes** received our gift of Old City Hall gift cards as thanks for their combined collection of \$5735 in pledges.

Bowling scores recognized included **Leann Santos** and **Al Whipper** for High Series, **Leon Haygood Jr.** and **Margene Peterson** for High Game, **Steve McWilliams** and **Bess Yoshikawa** for 2nd High Series, and **Brendan McClain** and **Linda White** for 2nd High Game.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for participants and donors alike. Your generosity allows us to continue our efforts in preserving and honoring our history.

Our profit for this year is \$7838.57, for a 10-year total of \$55,765.11. Hope to see you next March!

We've Been Busy During the Shutdown!

Architectural Awards

We had planned to present this year's architectural awards on June 28th at our Annual Meeting to be held at the Neon Exchange on Monterey St., but you can guess what happened! Doubting that such a gathering would be permitted by then, we have tentatively set it for Sunday, September 13th and will certainly keep you posted. Meanwhile Chair **Dave Matuszak** and his committee of **Phill Laursen, Maureen Hunter, Karen Pedigo, Pat Reinhart** and **Connie Rogers** have been working independently. Nominations were submitted by the end of March. Then each member visited the properties nominated and voted on the results. Phill will be taking photos and the results will be announced in the Society Page prior to our Annual Meeting, when it happens.

County Historic Grant Applications Approved

It seemed like an eternity waiting to hear if the Board of Supervisors voted on our two grant applications! That was originally scheduled for December, 2019, postponed to February, then March, then the virus struck. Finally, the vote was held in April and we were notified on April 24th that both our applications were approved for the full amounts we requested! We had to send the county our insurance certificate and are waiting for them to prepare the Full Funding Agreement which we must sign before work can proceed.

The John Gilroy Biography has been converted from the typewritten thesis manuscript into a computer program called InDesign thanks to **Phill Laursen**. He has added just a few graphics and maps. It is ready to go to the Printing Spot. The result will be a booklet of around 90 pages with this design on the cover. We plan to print about 200 copies which will be for sale at the Museum, and of course we will give some to the author and her children. Do you recognize the image of his statue at Old City Hall?

Joanie Lewis had the subjects all scheduled for filming with 152 West Productions in April. Due to the virus requirements this had to be postponed, but she is hoping it can be re-scheduled for July with appropriate social-distancing, masks, etc. Then it can be edited in the fall and shown as planned (we hope) at a luncheon in January 2021. Copies of the DVD will be for sale at the Museum and two copies will be donated to our library.

We are also pleased that CARAS was approved for a grant to restore the Aztec calendar mural downtown and the Miller Red Barn Association was approved for a second grant to complete restoration of the barn at the Ranch Site. These four historic grants from the county will enrich us all in Gilroy.

Exciting Donation from Gilroy Hot Springs

Alma Alfaro Juarez recently donated a remarkable account book from Gilroy Hot Springs. It was found in the cabin of Captain Kitaji who was the caretaker for many years and covers the period from Sept. 1945 to June, 1946. This is when Japanese people released from internment camps stayed at the Hot Springs until they could find permanent housing. Each page shows receipts and expenses for that day and has brief notations, in Japanese, of course. Volunteer **Marian Niiyama** and her husband are working on the translation.

John Gilroy A Biography



By Truda Cooling Nelson

Bunny Filice Endowment Funds

We are so grateful to Bunny for her dedication to the Museum. A few years ago, she questioned the purpose of our Museum Endowment Fund with the Gilroy Foundation.

It was explained that it was to eventually be able to hire a halftime manager for the Museum. But Bunny had another idea. She established a donor advised fund with the Foundation that would give the museum a grant for operating expenses every year! We've been receiving those funds for a few years now. In April we received \$650.

We appreciate ALL of our donors because they are an indication of our community support in addition to enabling us to hire our new Museum Managers. Here is a complete list of donors who responded to our letter last fall.

Donor Recognition

MUSEUM BENEFACTORS

GOLD LEVEL – up to \$500

Pete Lombardi

Michael & Katherine Tsujimoto

IN MEMORIAM GIFTS

For Linda Matuszak

by Dave Matuszak

For Phil Lawton

by Lenore Hailstone

Tiffany Lamnrecht

George M. Lawton

MUSEUM BENEFACTORS

SILVER LEVEL – up to \$250

Phyllis Armenta

Angelo Benassi

Bud & Barbara Biafore

Mario & Eileen Cavallaro

Barbara Drewitz

Tom & Becky Fisher

Habing Family Funeral Home

Lenore Hailstone

Ric Heinzen

John Kent

Moe & Kathy McHenry

Marian Niiyama

Anita Sciuttlo

J. David Sturla

Linda White

**MUSEUM BENEFACTORS
BRONZE LEVEL – up to \$100**

Charles & Alice Anderson	David Jeter
Richard & Barbara Armenta	Karl & Wendy Kissa
Dick & Elizabeth Barratt	Patricia Kutzer-Bayuga
Paul Baxter	Kelly Larsen
Sam Bozzo	Kristiane Maas
Walter Bunning	Ed & Elaine Maier
Donald Culver	David Matuszak
Kathleen Earnshaw	Steve & Diana McWilliams
Edith Edde	Daniel Mello
Margaret Enger	George Nichol
Joanne Fierro	James Oates
Don & Jeanne Gage	Alan Porcella
Julia Gimenez	Rick Santos
Bernie Habing	Judith Stutheit
Joan Halperin	Nancy Valencia
William C. Hart	Shirley Willard
Tom & Jenny Howard	Beth Wyman
	Bess Yoshikawa

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