

The Society Page

February 2014

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION TOUR OF THE IOOF CHILDREN'S HOME Rebekah Children's Services



Saturday, March 15th, 11:30 am
290 IOOF Avenue

We'll begin with lunch catered by Rebekah's Culinary Academy, then adjourn to a tour of this historic William Weeks Mediterranean-style building. Before or during lunch we will hear from our own **Elizabeth Barratt** about the history of the building. Others who have lived or worked there are invited, so there will be time to share stories.

RSVP with your menu preference by Monday, March 3rd, to **Linda White**, at 408-847-2861, or linda104@charter.net. Please mail your \$10 for lunch to our PO Box 1621, Gilroy, CA 95021.

Menu choices are BBQ Pork Sandwich, Asian Chicken Salad, or Turkey Club Sandwich. All include fresh fruit salad cup, roll and butter, cookie, and choice of iced tea or water, or hot tea or coffee.

DO YOU HAVE A NOMINATION FOR OUR 2014 ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS?

Have you noticed an historic building that is "looking good" this year? You can nominate a building for the 2014 Architectural Awards. Last year the star of our awards was the Victorian Hoenck house at 9480 Murray Avenue, whose new owner completely rehabilitated the very neglected exterior. Dr. Bahman Medizadeh received our Historic House Award for his outstanding efforts.

Just send your nomination by March 31st, using any of the below methods:

E-mail: Gilroy.Museum@ci.gilroy.ca.us
Mail: Gilroy Museum, 195 Fifth Street, Gilroy, CA 95020
Phone: (408) 846-0446

Please include your name, the street address of the nominee, and include a brief explanation of why you think the building or residence deserves an award.

The categories are:

Historic Design Award - for a new building in the downtown area that complements the original historic buildings, or enhances the Downtown Historic District area.

Historic Commercial Building Award - for a building at least 50 years old in the downtown Historic District or on an Historic Site that restores, retains or preserves the building's historical, cultural or architectural values.

Historic House Award - for a home that is at least 50 years old that is an outstanding example of restoration and renovation (exterior only).

Certificate of Commendation for residential, commercial, or "other." This could be for new construction, restoration, renovation, additions, landscaping, painting or significant improvement.

2013 MUSEUM ENDOWMENT FUND DONORS

We are eternally grateful to these generous donors who are helping us grow our Endowment Fund with the Gilroy Foundation.

SUCCESSFUL BOWLATHON 2014

Our 4th annual Bowlathon was held at Gilroy Bowl on January 25th. This year 16 women and 9 men signed up to collect pledges from their friends and families for the benefit of our Endowment Fund. Once again, we had more entrants and they raised more money! Pledges ranged from \$3 to \$200 for a total profit of \$3755.51, our best yet.

Bowling awards were presented to Julia Gimenez and Rick Santos for High Series, Shirley Carroll and Rich Spence for High Games, **Linda White** and Paul Yoshikawa for 2nd High Series, and Bess Yoshikawa and **Jim Rogers** and 2nd High Games. Margene Peterson again collected the highest pledge dollars, while Shirley Carroll had the most sponsors.

Gilroy Bowl, Gilroy & Gavilan Golf Courses, Papa Murphy's Pizza, Blossom Valley Foods, Costco, Old City Hall Restaurant, and Nob Hill Foods all donated some terrific prizes for us to offer in a drawing for participants. We had great food and a very good time. Maybe next year will be your year to join in for the fun....

OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

We have almost 30 dedicated, helpful, skillful volunteers at the Gilroy Museum. The newest one is **Joann Fierro** who started last fall. The volunteers answer questions, greet visitors, help with research, file papers, update lists of births, deaths and marriages, enter data in the computer, give tours both in and outside of the Museum, make copies, take photos, even sweep the steps and dust. These tasks can be boring, but when they locate something a visitor is looking for or make a connection, it can be exciting. Visitors often thank them verbally, but seldom do we get appreciation like the letter below which was recently received on the City's website and shared with City management.

Gratitude for Gilroy Museum

Hello, I was raised in Gilroy, CA and still visit at least twice a year to see my extended family who still live in the city. I grew up on 10th and Rosanna. I recently spent Nov. and Dec. of 2013 in Gilroy, CA for the sake of researching my family history and gathering information and stories. The Gilroy Museum was so pivotal in the success of unearthing the details of my family history. I spent several hours at the Museum learning about the basic history of the city of Gilroy which is the context for my family history (we go back 3 or so generations in the area), and also spent time perusing the old Gilroy Dispatches. The volunteer staff at the Museum saved me a significant amount of time specifically because of their organized index for when death notices appeared in the Dispatch, key information for discovering more about my family. I was able to bring this information back to the elders of my family and essentially help them with reviewing their life considering their older ages, in addition to bringing this info to my younger family members and enlightening them.

I am emailing the City of Gilroy about this experience because access to a city's historical archives is vital to the positive well-being of a city; it gives the city residents an identity. I was amazed to hear that the Gilroy Museum was at risk of being permanently closed due to funding, which I can only perceive as the lack of value for history felt by the city leaders. I am so grateful for the stewardship of the Gilroy Museum volunteers for pushing to keep the place open. My genealogical research would not have been so complete or successful had I not had access to the Museum and its archives. I hope the city will not only continue to maintain funding, but even include the Museum and its archives more in the development and advertising of the city.

Thanks for your time, Abraham Pena

We did thank our volunteers with a wonderful Christmas Lunch at the Willey House. Here's a photo of the festive occasion....



MUSEUM NEWS

We are planning a **50th Anniversary Celebration** for the Museum on May 13 and 15th! **1963-2013** is quite a record to be proud of, don't you think? It will be an Open House with a special exhibit, tentatively planned to showcase the recently-donated extensive postcard collection of the late Steve Medley, which spans 100 years. It will include a Book Sale of some of the books we inherited when the public library moved out in 1975. Look for more news as our plans progress.

Last fall **Tom Howard**, lead volunteer, obtained permission from the City Council to deaccession over 3,400 books for careful disposal, which will free up a great deal of needed storage space. We shared duplicate copies of some old city directories with the

Gilroy Library and neighboring historical societies. Tom also successfully concluded the **sale of around 450 of the most valuable books to an antique book dealer for \$4226.50**. The money earned belongs to the City and was placed in the City's Museum Trust Fund. According to the terms of the trust, the interest from this fund can be used for the benefit of the Museum when the Society has presented a plan for its use.

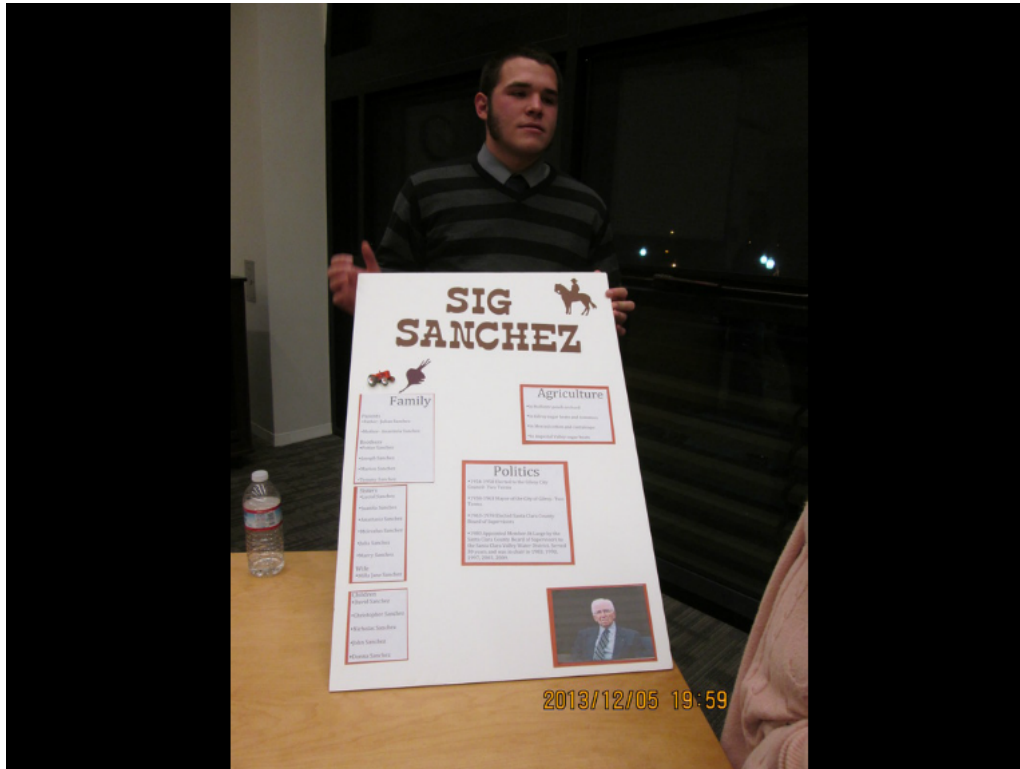
On February 11th the Art and Culture Commission received our **annual report** via Tom Howard's Power Point and oral report. They recommended approval of transferring last year's interest of \$277.88 from the City's Museum Trust Fund. We will use this interest plus other City funds to purchase perforated metal shelving for our collection. The shelving will allow air circulation and allow us to maintain the collection in the best possible condition.

Also, the City granted us \$2272 to use for contractual services in this fiscal year. In December volunteers Nancy Alford, Kristine Dillon and Carol DeSantis attended an all-day workshop for **Archival Training** in Redwood City with part of this stipend. Tom Howard is in the process of contracting with a **photo conservator** to evaluate the Museum's photo collection and give a workshop to our volunteers, which will use the remainder of the funds.

And have you seen our **new TV monitor** mounted high on the wall of the rotunda? It will display some of the hundreds of photos in the Museum's collection, enabling visitors to see them more easily. This is still a work in progress as the flash drives are being loaded and we are figuring out how to show them to best advantage.

ORAL HISTORY REPORTS

The California History class of Gavilan professor Leah Halper treated us to a Poster Talk of their interviews on December 5th at the Gilroy Library. About a dozen subjects were interviewed, including Sig Sanchez, Dr. David Barton, Cecilia Weymouth and other community leaders. Some students interviewed their grandparents. These pictures show the results. A written summary of the interviews is also archived through the Gavilan College library on the following website: <http://www.gavilan.edu/library/oralhistory>.



BITS AND PIECES

Old St. Mary Cemetery Collaboration - St. Mary Parish, Habing Family Funeral Home, Gavilan Chapter of the DAR and your Society have formed a coalition to improve the current neglected state of the old St. Mary Cemetery. It was established with the beginning of the parish in 1865 and contains some notable graves: John Gilroy, Father Thomas Hudson, founder of the parish, Jose Maria Amador, for whom Amador County is named, and Caroline O'Toole Murphy Dunne, along with her first and second husbands and children. **Joanie Lewis** and **Sarah Kelly** have joined our committee.

We have a plan that includes better lighting on the east side, careful pruning of seven large oaks and a pine, removal of some unwanted privets, possibly a new wrought iron fence and gates, and above all, a sign identifying the cemetery. We plan to ask the City to add the cemetery to their list of Historic Sites and apply for grants to help with the considerable expenses. We have estimates for the tree pruning and the fences. Our tour of the cemetery last November brought out 30 participants. In January **Joanie Lewis** and **Karen Pedigo** presented our DVD about the Museum to the San Martin Lions Club and talked about the cemetery project. The Lions plan to contribute some of their bingo earnings to the cause! We hope to gain the support of other individuals and community groups also. If you know of anyone, please let **Joanie Lewis** or **Connie Rogers** know.

Thank you to Old City Hall Restaurant for continuing the successful use of our favorite historic building, for donating to the Society in excess of our fundraiser earnings, and for selling the Old City Hall book on our behalf!

And we have ordered a new banner for the Society, bearing our Old City Hall logo, from Richard Young of Young Signs, a business in Gilroy for the last 70 years!

NATIONAL REGISTER HOUSE FOR SALE

One of our most elegant Victorian homes is for sale, the Holloway House, located just south of the Post Office on Egleberry Street. It was designed by famous central coast architect, William Weeks, in 1900 and was the first building in Gilroy to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The woodwork inside is simply gorgeous! Check out the virtual tour at: <http://360baytours.com/7539>.

MILLER RED BARN

What do YOU think about the future of the red barn at Christmas Hill Park Ranch Site? We believe it was probably built by Henry Miller, Gilroy's famous Cattle King, who owned all the land on the west side of town. Although we like the looks of the barn, it has had no maintenance since the City purchased the property many years ago. The Master Plan for the park shows it being replaced by a red barn-like building which would contain a large meeting room, kitchen, classrooms, etc. But who knows whether or when it will be built?

The City Council approved demolition of the red barn, old house, and trailer last fall but without public notice. Councilman Woodward asked for the topic to be brought up for public discussion. At the February 3rd Council meeting several people spoke on behalf of the barn, notably Mary Yates who defined it as "an icon of the community" and said it "reminds us of our agricultural heritage." The Council deferred demolition for a year and charged the barn defenders with both raising funds for rehabilitation and developing a plan for using the barn. Carol DeSantis is spearheading this committee. If you'd like to help, call her at (408) 612-6631 or email her at cdesants2000@yahoo.com.

[Home](#) | [Contact](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Store](#) | [The Society Page Archives](#) | [Join](#) | [Volunteer](#)

Create a website with SnapPages