



## The Society Page June 2014

### JOIN US AT HISTORIC GILROY GOLF COURSE For our ANNUAL MEETING Sunday, June 29th Noon to 2:00 p.m. 2695 Hecker Pass Highway

We will meet in the barbecue area next to the driveway, across from the parking lot. Lunch will be catered by Troy Garcia of the Gilroy Grill for \$15/person, including non-alcoholic beverages and water. Please RSVP by Monday, June 23rd to tell us how many will be attending. Mail your check, made out to the Gilroy Historical Society for \$15/person, to our PO Box 1621, Gilroy, CA 95021.

## AGENDA FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

- I. Treasurer's Report
- II. Endowment Fund Progress
- III. Accomplishments for 2013-2014
- IV. Goals for this year
- V. Questions, Suggestions or Requests from Members
- VI. Presentation of 2014 Architectural Awards

## ENDOWMENT FUND PROGRESS

We are making wonderful progress thanks to our very generous donors and supporters! In the past year we have been able to deposit \$12,000 from donations and fundraiser earnings into our Museum Fund with the Gilroy Foundation. We also received a final distribution of \$25,000 from the estate of our former board member, **Linda Burnett**. With interest, our balance at the end of 2013 was \$142,393.

Our goal of reaching \$500,000 in our Museum Endowment Fund seems very high, but we believe it will take that much to generate enough income to pay a half-time professional director of the Gilroy Museum. With major help from the Lindeleaf Fund (which now stands at \$88,886) we are almost at the halfway point. A professional director will ensure that the Museum stays open, no matter what, but volunteers are the ones who breathe life into it!

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2013-14

1. Staffed the Gilroy Museum with volunteers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and the first Saturdays of every month, or about 65 hours/month. Welcomed six new volunteers.
2. Led free walking tours to different historic areas of Gilroy on nine first Saturdays/year.
3. Sold items at the Gilroy Museum and the Welcome Center to fund our museum operating budget. Monthly pizza sales to bowlers also added to operating funds.
4. Held fundraisers at Old City Hall Restaurant and a Bowl-a-thon at Gilroy Bowl to raise money for our Museum Endowment Fund.
5. 2013 Architectural Awards went to Egleberry Tax Service, Fifth Street Coffee Shop, the Grange Hall, old Wheeler Hospital, the Gilroy Train Station, Bella Viva Ristorante, and six historic homes.
6. Earned \$1022.65 selling art posters in the Mercantile Tent at the Garlic Festival.
7. Supported Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs in their efforts to restore public access to the Gilroy Hot Springs.
8. Purchased a TV for the Museum that can show our Museum DVD and collections of our historic photos on flash drives.
9. Began a partnership with Gavilan Chapter of the DAR, St. Mary Parish and Habing Family Funeral Home to improve and recognize the original St. Mary cemetery containing the graves of John Gilroy and other important ancestors.
10. Sponsored a reception for the students of Gavilan History professor Leah Halper who interviewed seniors about their lives, made posters and gave us presentations.
11. Gave a thank you Christmas luncheon celebrating our Museum Volunteers at the Willey House.
12. Held a three-day celebration of the Museum's 50 years of service to our city.

## GOALS FOR 2014-15

- A. Continue staffing the Gilroy Museum two days a week and improve our practices there. Explore adding more Saturday hours.
- B. Add to our Museum Endowment Fund with the Gilroy Foundation.

- C. Support preservation of historic buildings and increase the vitality of Gilroy's historic downtown.
- D. Continue our Architectural Awards program.
- E. Continue our Residential Plaque Program.
- F. Increase visitation and access of the Museum for school children and the community.
- G. Provide interesting quarterly programs for our members and friends.
- H. Maintain and improve our website and Facebook page.
- I. Continue our partnership plan to improve old St. Mary Cemetery.
- J. Support the efforts of the Miller Red Barn Committee to repair and find a use for the barn at Christmas Hill Ranch site as an icon of our agricultural heritage.
- K. Raise the profile of Gilroy's rich history in ways that increase tourism and economic vitality.

## ARCHITECTURAL AWARD WINNERS FOR 2014

### Historic Home Category

7750 Hanna Street, known as the Quale Maternity Home

7831 Hanna Street

7681 Hanna Street

7711 Princeville Street

291 Lewis Street

### Historic Commercial Building

Habing Family Funeral Home, 129 Fourth Street

### Certificate of Commendation

Pinnacle Bank Building, 7597 Monterey Street

Again this year professional architectural photographer Kris Knudson has photographed these properties. His photos will be on display at our annual meeting and the owners will be our guests for lunch. The photos will appear in our next Society Page. The owners of these homes and commercial buildings have earned our public admiration and thanks for maintaining their historic properties in a very attractive way that complements our city. Many, many thanks to **Kathy Hodgdon** and her committee of Dan Palmerlee, **Phyllis Armenta**, and **Connie Rogers**.

## FIFTY SUCCESSFUL YEARS AT THE MUSEUM

A little after the fact, we realized that the Gilroy Museum has been in existence since 1963, over fifty years! It's quite a record and definitely enough to qualify as an historic institution. The Museum has come a long way since Armand White displayed his historic artifacts in the basement of our Carnegie Library. **Barbara Biafore** had several great ideas, which she proceeded to translate into a wonderful, weeklong 50th celebration Open House on May 13, 15 and 17.

We had some new exhibits for the occasion, including three very special ones:

- 1) The 1937 wedding dress of Rose Conrotto, recently donated by her daughter along with two 8 x 10 photos of the bride and groom and the wedding party.
- 2) The publication of the long-awaited booklet, Preserving Gilroy's Prune Heritage from Abruzzini to Zanger, with autographs by **Al Gagliardi**.
- 3) The recently donated collection of 173 Gilroy postcards spanning 100 years. They were collected by the late Steve Medley and donated by his sister Robin.



Seventy-five visitors signed our special guest book. Zoe Lofgren, our Congresswoman had to reschedule her visit for June 3rd, and we're looking forward to it.

On Saturday, **Tom Howard** conducted a very successful sale of many of the de-accessioned books, with volunteer help from students of the Gavilan Early College Academy (GECA). He earned \$850 for the City's Museum Trust Fund and we gained a lot of storage space in the Museum basement. Hurray!





## PRUNE BOOK FOR SALE

---

*Al Gagliardi's Prune Box Collection*

## Preserving Gilroy's Prune Heritage



---

The Society's former President, well-known community member **Al Gagliardi**, collected more than 350 prune box ends over a period of sixty years. He really wanted to use them to document our now-vanished prune heritage in South County. During that era literally hundreds of families cultivated prunes and took them to the Sunsweet co-op dryer in Gilroy. Even the beginning date of school depended on the timing of the prune harvest, as kids were needed to help. Our multi-talented member, **Phill Laursen**,

photographed all the box ends and, using other photos about all phases of growing prunes and a little text, composed this 33-page memory book. You can get yours for \$10 at the Museum!

## MILLER RED BARN PRESERVATION EFFORTS by Phill Laursen & Connie Rogers

The aesthetically pleasing red barn surrounded by a fence on the Ranch Site of Christmas Hill Park is probably the most historically significant barn in the region. While a search continues to find a deed, building permit, or other official document to settle the matter, many are quite sure that Henry Miller built this barn, because he owned all the land on the west side of Gilroy. There is special concern about the barn because of its link to Miller, the "Cattle King," once the largest landowner in the US, whose headquarters were here in Gilroy. The City seems inclined to demolish it but has granted just a year's time for the community to raise money so the Miller Barn can be given a new lease on life.

The Miller Red Barn Committee has been established to make sure the Barn is made safe for use without harming its historic value, and to find new uses. The Committee believes the barn will be a beautiful and important reflection of a farm economy that was once the mainstay, and remains an important part of, Gilroy's economy; that it can be a center for local history and culture, and an icon of community identity much in the way Old City Hall is; and that it can be an engine for tourism, recreation and economic growth. Further, the Committee has found several regional models for transforming the barn and surroundings to accomplish these goals. The Miller Red Barn Committee is affiliated with the Gilroy Foundation as their fiscal agent. You can be part of this effort to save an important piece of our agricultural history, by contacting Carol DeSantis at [cdesantis2000@yahoo.com](mailto:cdesantis2000@yahoo.com).

More ways to help the barn:

Help support the "Bucks for the Barn" campaign by making a donation for a "Save the Barn" button available at the Museum or from a Barn Committee member.

Attend their fundraising BBQ to be held at the Demonstration Garden, 7360 Egleberry Street, Gilroy, on Sunday evening, June 29th between 4 and 8 PM. The event will be catered by Fire 4 Hire, Jeff Raby, with live music, local wines, raffle and silent auction. Tickets (limited to 100) are available for a \$45 donation at Nimble Thimble (7750 Monterey Street, 408-842-6501), Chamber of Commerce (7471 Monterey Street, 408-842-6437), or Gary Walton's office (22 Martin Street, upstairs, 408-847-8197).

All proceeds go toward Saving the Miller Red Barn, affiliated with the non-profit Gilroy Foundation. For more information see us at: <https://www.facebook.com/savemillerredbarn>

This link takes you to the latest Dispatch barn blog posting, about the Miller Barn:

[http://www.gilroydispatch.com/blogs/barn\\_again/the-henry-miller-barn/article\\_64a07ef8-e496-11e3-b026-101f742c6b16.html](http://www.gilroydispatch.com/blogs/barn_again/the-henry-miller-barn/article_64a07ef8-e496-11e3-b026-101f742c6b16.html)

This link opens all the postings:

[http://www.gilroydispatch.com/blogs/barn\\_again/](http://www.gilroydispatch.com/blogs/barn_again/)



## PHOTO CONSERVATION EVALUATION AND WORKSHOP AT THE MUSEUM by Tom Howard



Right after doing extra duty for our 50th celebration, and in spite of it being Memorial Day weekend, twelve of our volunteers participated in a photo conservation workshop held at the Gilroy Library on Saturday, May 24th. Participants from the Los Gatos Museum and San Juan Bautista Historical Society also took part. The presenter was Gawain Weaver, a photo and paper conservator and owner of GW Art Conservation in San Anselmo. The previous day Mr. Weaver performed a detailed survey of our photograph collection, which included examination of the Museum's film, slide, digital and microform collections as well as "regular" photographs. His services, and a December archives workshop put on by the State Archivist's office attended by three of our volunteers, were made possible by a \$2200 budget allotment from the City of Gilroy, specifically designated for contractual services aimed at improving our abilities to care for the Museum collections. Thank you for such helpful support!



## GARLIC FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are so lucky to have one of the best assignments at the Festival ..... jobs in the shade of the Mercantile Tent helping patrons choose art posters from past years! We don't have to handle money and there are even a few chairs to use during slow times. Last year we earned over \$1000, money that helps pay the Society's operating expenses all year long. If you can help us by taking one morning or afternoon shift on Friday, July 25th, Saturday, July 26th, or Sunday, July 27th, please call **Barbara Biafore** at 408-842-7515.

## BAD NEWS, GOOD NEWS AND PROGRESS AT OLD ST. MARY CEMETERY

In mid-February, a huge oak tree inside the historic St. Mary Cemetery split in half and came crashing down on the beautiful Dunne monument complex in the northeast corner. We were dismayed and discouraged. But several good things came out of the tragedy. The plan our committee had for trimming seven large oaks and a pine tree was miraculously carried out within the next two weeks. The old chain link fence was growing through some of the trees, causing removal of both the trees and the fence sections. The committee is still discussing what to do about the fence.

While discussing what type of signage to erect, Debbie Pellicione had a great idea. She suggested we use a large piece of white marble left over from an altar that had cracked in the 1989 earthquake. There is even a second large piece of white marble that could be used to create an appropriate monument of John Gilroy's grave. Sounds promising!

And finally, we asked the City for improved lighting in the alleys surrounding the cemetery on three sides. They evaluated the situation and recommended upgrading the four current lights to 150W LED lights. These are awaiting installation from the contractor. That should cut down on the dumping, vandalism and illicit behavior. Stay tuned for more developments as they occur.

## RECENT DONATIONS

On May 6th the Silicon Valley Foundation and the Gilroy Foundation sponsored their first ever Online Giving Day. Seven hundred non-profit organizations in Santa Clara, San Benito and San Mateo counties participated, including your Society. You may have seen the information on our website or Facebook page. These two wonderful donors gave to the Gilroy Museum Fund: **Joanne Kraemer**, \$500, and **Phyllis Armenta**, \$50.

**Richard Young** of Young Signs created and donated a super new banner for us. You will see it at our Annual Meeting! It is approximately 8' x 3' and has our "logo," the line drawing of Old City Hall, on the left, and on the right, **Gilroy Historical Society** using the same font as our Society Page masthead. It is beautiful and a huge improvement over our previous banner! Thank you Richard!

## AND IF YOU WANT TO HELP US, HERE'S AN EASY WAY.....

Do you ever order from Amazon online? If you place your order at this website, the Society will get .5% automatically:

<http://smile.amazon.com>

Thank you **Phyllis Armenta** for bringing this to our attention!

