



Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

November 2015

Home for the Holidays—New Exhibit Opens November 27

Home for the Holidays, a new exhibit from the Saratoga History Museum will open November 27 and run through January 31. The new exhibit will feature December



and January holiday traditions from around the world.

People of all ages and interests will enjoy seeing the exhibit and learning about the history of some of these important celebrations.

The exhibit includes Christmas, Hanukkah, Chinese New Years, Kwanza, Boxing Day and many more. Find out about some of the traditional symbols, celebrations, and the history of each celebration.

Do you know the history behind the candy cane? Nutcrackers? Hanging Christmas stockings? Come to the exhibit and find out!

Bring a Toy for the Toy Drive!!

Bring a new, unwrapped toy for the annual toy drive held by the city of Saratoga and Sacred Heart church. The museum will be collecting toys for this drive until December 15.

Open House in the Village



Stop by the museum on November 27 from 5-8 PM and enjoy the new exhibit and the sounds and

tastes of the holiday. The Marshall Lane Mustang Choir will sing Christmas carols at 5:30 PM in front of the museum and then at 6 PM, the Skillet Lickers will sing. Free hot cider and cookies will be available.

Saratoga Historical Park all Decked Out
All three buildings in the Saratoga Historical Park—museum, McWilliams house, and the one-room schoolhouse are decorated for the holidays. Stop by and see the decorations. Thanks for the fabulous decorating job! Not shown, Joan Bose and Annette Stransky.



From Pits to Chips—New Program Series



The Saratoga Historical Foundation will be celebrating the museum's 40th anniversary in 2016. We'll kickoff the membership lecture program in January

with a special film compilation of vintage films covering fruit canning, packing, growing and more produced by the California Pioneers and the Fruit Cocktail Club. The films will be lighthearted and compelling!

The March program will be a special book signing and lecture on the Pacific Congress Springs by authors Ian Sanders and Michael Brookman. The Pacific Congress Springs was one of the first resorts on the west coast and a boon to Saratoga's growth.

Saratoga Historical Foundation Officers

The mission of the Saratoga Historical Foundation is to preserve the unique history of Saratoga for the education and enjoyment of the community.

Executive Committee

Annette Stransky, President
Bob Himel, Vice President
Recording Secretary, Open position
Yuchi Wang, Treasurer

Newsletter

The Saratoga Historical Foundation newsletter is produced 6X a year. If you have comments or suggestions, e-mail:

annette@saratogahistory.com

The Saratoga History Museum, McWilliams House and schoolhouse are located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road and open from 1-4 PM Friday through Sunday. Call 408-867-4311 to arrange group or docent-led tours. Be sure to visit our gift shop. Visit our website:

<http://www.saratogahistory.com>.

events in Saratoga's history and moderated by SHF Historian Ray Cosyn.

And a special fourth program will cover Silicon Valley achievements and will include the contributions of a Saratogan. Sound intriguing? Come to the meeting.

By now you've figured out the pits—were a reference to the fruit industry and the chips a reference to Silicon Valley, right?

Change of Date!!

We've changed the dates of the membership programs for 2016—to the fourth Wednesday of the month so the January program will be on January 27. Same format—potluck at 6:30 PM and lecture at 7:30 PM.

March 23 and May 25 are the dates for the other two membership programs. The fourth will be announced soon.

Attendance is free for members; \$5.00 for nonmembers. All membership lectures are held at the Saratoga Foothill Club at 20399 Park Place in Saratoga.

History in the Making

Hundreds gathered for the opening of the 64-acre Saratoga Quarry Park on October

31. The scenic spot was once the scene of copper mining, lime kiln mining, a sand and rock quarry before it became a gravel quarry. In 1917 it was part of the set for filming "The Wolf's Fangs", a movie about the Alaskan goldmine. Tina Liddie dressed for



Halloween as a Village Gardener and attended the celebration

Calendar at a Glance

Nov. 27	Holiday Exhibit & Open House. Exhibit runs through January 31
Jan. 27	Membership program—Fruit Cocktail of Films By the California Pioneers
March 19	Blossom Festival
March 23	Membership program—Pacific Congress Springs And book signing by Ian Sanders and Michael Brookman
May 25	Membership program—Panel discussion on Saratoga

Open House and New Exhibit Debuts November 27

Make plans to see the Christmas tree lighting; Village Open House and the Museum on November 27. Fun starts at 5:30 PM in Blaney Plaza for the annual tree lighting.

Save the Date—Big Parade on December 5 in Los Gatos

Be sure to see the 59th Annual Los Gatos Children's Christmas/Holidays Parade on Saturday, December 5 at 11:00 AM. Many Saratoga bands and businesses participate in the parade!!

Saratoga High School is in the Rose Parade on Television on January 1
Don't forget to watch the Rose Parade in the



morning on television January 1. This year the Saratoga High School band and color guard will be marching in the parade. The 127 year old parade from Pasadena, California features floats, horse troops, and more and typically precedes the football game.

Free Concert December 7 with the Saratoga Community Band



Come listen to the Saratoga Community band on December 7 at McAfee Center (Saratoga High School) at 7:30 PM. The free concert will feature songs from Hollywood.

Make 2016 the Year You Volunteer!

The Saratoga History Museum has many areas in which you can volunteer. Consider Foothill College students who are busily labeling and indexing over 12000 photos the Saratoga News donated earlier this year. They have completed labeling 2000 photos in just three short months.

Or consider helping out at one of the three membership meetings by making coffee or setting up tablecloths.

Or even becoming a museum or education docent!

Just give us a call and we'll put you to work! Make 2016 the year you volunteer.

Volunteer!

The Seamy Side of Theater

Mae Heagerty-Matos says ripping seams and repurposing clothing is her forte. Her



first experience in theater was trying out for the play, Oklahoma while attending Redwood Middle School in Saratoga. She didn't get the part but was asked to make costumes. And she was hooked!

Matos

grew up in Saratoga in the 1960's on Pierce Road and stayed through the 90's.

The self-taught seamstress made costumes for plays in high school, college and today as an adult. As a volunteer, she has repurposed costumes for over 30-40 theater groups. And mention the Dickens Faire or Renaissance Faire, her face lights up as she recalls costumes she has made.

"I have always enjoyed getting dressed up," she says. "Halloween, Dicken's Faire—you name it. Even today when my children are grown up they will call me for help with a costume."

A busy project development manager by day, she volunteers to help various theater groups wear the right costume at night.

According to Matos, "I read a script, find out the director's vision, see what needs to be done with the staging and timing of the show, and then go to work. I make a

spreadsheet for each costume change. As an example if the timing is close, I might use velcro instead of buttons so the actor can make a faster change."

Where does she get ideas for costumes? "I have 100's of books to research costumes. Sears and Montgomery catalogs are great reference sources for middle class costumes of particular eras—the catalogs have clothes, accessories, shoes—perfect for recreating the era in need. I am very tactile—I love to touch fabric, velvet, silks and natural fabrics are my favorites."

Once she has an idea for a costume, she searches thrift shops and other stores for material. Ask how to find a period man's shirt—she'll say, "Just remove the collar."

Or those fabulous hats women wore—"just get a good felt hat and add flowers" is the creative answer. She operates with a minimal budget—as an example \$500 might be budgeted for a musical and the budget must include shoes, dry cleaning and laundry. And Matos is off in search of the best fabric and clothing. After a show she donates the costumes or in some cases, repurposes. But she notes she doesn't have the space to store the costumes.

Each show is a big time commitment—over 40 hours but Matos says, "I am the queen of lists. I am very organized and have clothes racks in my garage to keep me even more organized. My workplace may look chaotic but it is organized chaos."

In addition to meeting with the director, she meets with the set designer to see the colors of the set to make sure everything is harmonious. One time, she notes, the set colors were changed from green to blue and all the costumes were blue! The set was changed back to green.

Working with actors and actresses are also a challenge. They might not like a particular color of an outfit or feel the outfit doesn't make them look their best. It takes tact to handle all the egos. And Matos prepares for

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emergencies by including a sewing kit in each dressing room.

The always patient and smiling Matos might have had a longer interview with us but she was off to search for a unique pair of shoes for the next costume.

Center Stage Reception

Vicky Wyant said, “The arts never die here—I taught school at Redwood Junior High and the students were able to travel to Europe to perform in productions. Saratoga won’t let the arts die. It really speaks highly of the cultural level of the community.”

Wyant made her comments while attending the reception held September 20 for the exhibit, Center Stage, that traced 100 years of theater groups in Saratoga .

Jackie Morris, also attended the reception and had fun reminiscing about being the stage manager for two of Lilian Fontaine’s plays. She described Lilian Fontaine as a very caring, nice lady. The two plays Fontaine directed were held at Montalvo during the 60’s, according to Morris.

Brian Berg also enjoyed visiting the exhibit and reminiscing about Saratoga drama groups, too. He remembered Margaret Sutton who was a co-founder of VITA.

With guitar music in the background and light refreshments, people enjoyed examining the exhibit, comparing notes on memories, and expressing surprise at the number of drama groups in Saratoga.



Lunching in the Museum

Betty Peck was invited to hold her weekly Thursday salon in the museum so she could enjoy seeing some of the photos of her husband in Theatre on the Ground, son Bill who co-founded VITA, as well as her father-in-law and husband Willys Peck in Dorothea Johnston’s productions.

A special guest of the salon was the first “Juliet” in Romeo and Juliet that was held in the production of Theatre on the Ground.



Fund-raiser Held October 18, a Success

The Bill Cooper family were one of many



who enjoyed the recent fund-raiser for the Saratoga Historical Foundation at Hakone Gardens. The event included a silent auction, docent-

led tour of Hakone Gardens, lively music and good food and beverages. Thanks to the generosity of many, over \$6100 was raised towards building the blacksmith exhibit.

Our thanks to JLohr winery who donated the wine; the many silent auction donors; and Bill Gorman who has consistently supported SHF by bringing many guests!

Montpere Block Party Knows How to Celebrate



Block parties are rare today but not on Montpere Way in Saratoga where it is an annual event. Recently the neighbors on the street celebrate its 60th birthday thanks to George and Jo Rodgers!!

The couple enjoys the history of the street and have collected the original photos and sale sheets of the housing tract.

In 1955 Peremont developers completed a development tract of homes in Sunnyvale and discovered they had more buyers than homes! According to George Rodgers, the developer started the same type of housing development in Saratoga on what was to become Montpere Way. Peremont had 79 houses in this early subdivision, and was targeting engineers and factory workers at nearby industrial plants such as Lockheed.

The orchard was razed to make way for the development and the Rodgers family moved into the first home built. They could still see the original farmhouse behind their house.

It is believed the street was named Montpere after the developer's name, Peremont.

The \$13,950 homes were eagerly sought. They were built with redwood and a bank of airy windows during the 1950's. The custom-built homes were designed by Anshen and Allen—heavily influenced by Palo Alto architect Joseph Eichler.

But the character of the home is equaled sometimes by the character of the people living in the home! Jo and her brother had fond memories growing up on Montpere Way. Their mother, an artist, would create unique and memorable sets in the front of the house to scare visiting trick or treaters during Halloween. Block parties were the norm with neighbors having a barbecue to celebrate the 4th of July or a potluck to celebrate Christmas. Recipes were swapped and more importantly, long term friendships were formed. Today many of those same neighbors came to celebrate the street's 60th birthday.

Neighbors at that time knew one another by name. Jo remembers one fellow was an engineer who flew the Spruce Goose (owned by billionaire recluse Howard Hughes). Another neighbor had an aunt who was a survivor of the sinking of the Titanic.

The street is on an incline and one fond memory was skating downhill with a heart stopping stop just before reaching Quito.

Those halcyon days were when homes could be left unlocked. Children could play in the street and could walk to and from school, carefree.

Both George and Jo share the same values of community and have already started planning next year's block party.

Time Flies



Time flies when you're having a good time and a letter asking you to renew your SHF membership is winging its way to you. Don't forget you can give the gift of membership to a friend --a year-long gift that will be appreciated.

Looking Back in Time

Like many of the buildings on Big Basin Way, The Plumed Horse restaurant has a colorful past. Supposedly in the 1800's, a tinker or person who mended pots and pans built a livery stable on the site of the present restaurant for his horse. On cold days, he would ensure the horse was covered with a blanket. And in the spring, he would decorate his horse with a hat of fresh flowers and an ostrich feather plume —creating a jaunty look.

As the town prospered and grew, the Old Swiss Hotel was constructed and shared the site with the livery stable. The hotel survived until 1900 when it was destroyed by fire. It was at this time that the main structure of the Plumed Horse was built— recycling the lumber from the stable and Old Swiss Hotel.

The building was first open to the public as a junk shop, later became the American Antique Store and then an antique store and tea house in 1940.



About 1952 the Plumed Horse adopted the name from the past. Since 1972 the Plumed Horse Restaurant has enjoyed a prestigious reputation in dining.

A series of hoof prints are found in front of the front door adding a touch of whimsy.

Open House-- a Saratoga Village and Museum Tradition

The Village Open House is a tradition that originated in 1972 by the Saratoga Village Association. Festivities at that time included bands, Santa Claus, petting zoo, strolling minstrels, and horse-drawn carriages. One

year the Association had free food with restaurants offering select holiday samples.

Opportunities to write to Santa as well as to send Christmas cards to the military were also sometimes included in the festivities.

One of the traditions that began in 1983 and for over 20



years was to have Don Miller dress as Father Christmas and to greet visitors. Don Miller appeared every year until his death in 2009. Miller became Father Christmas as

part of a fund-raising activity for the Valley Institute of Theater Arts (VITA) and he quickly became a popular icon.

Today the Village Open House is under the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce charter with many of the same festivities-- including a new Father Christmas.

The Saratoga History Museum has participated in the Village Open House since 1976 when the museum first opened. Cookies, hot cider and music have always been part of the tradition.

Mid-Autumn Festival Success



Mid-Autumn Festival was held September 27 with several hundred

attending at the Saratoga Historical Park. Produced by the OCAW, the festival included crafts, music, history lecture, and mooncake tasting! OCAW has brought new memberships to SHF—Thank you!



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First India Showcase Festival

The sights and sounds of India could be heard at the India Showcase, held October 25 at the Saratoga Historical Park. Many gathered to enjoy an afternoon of music, crafts, classical and traditional Indian dancing, and food. Included in the event was a presentation by Ray Cosyn on Saratoga history. Thank you Rina Shah for coordinating the event.



National Charity League Partnership

The National Charity League (NCL)



recently held a fair with all 29 of their non-profit partners. Each partner was asked to have a short project for the

mother-daughter service group to perform. Of course, SHF asked help in stuffing envelopes for sending to prospective members!

NCL has been providing museum docents for the Saratoga History Museum which has been a big help. More recently they helped setup the event at Hakone Gardens. Thanks!

