

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org



Historic tour

PHS Historian George Vincent (center, wearing hat with brim) led an enthusiastic group of history seekers on a walking tour of historic downtown Pinole on May 15.

Pinole Community TV taped it; it's airing on channel 28 and will soon be on the city of Pinole website.

**MORE WALKING TOUR
PHOTOS ON PAGE 4**

FLAG DAY ESSAY CONTEST A HIT WITH TEACHERS

The Pinole Historical Society's second Flag Day Essay Contest went very well. We received many well-written essays from first grade to high school.

Students in Pinole schools answered the question, "What does the

American flag mean to you?" Teachers picked the best essays in their classes and grades, and judges selected the best essays in each participating school.

The Mechanics Bank co-sponsored the event again this year, presenting the grand-prize

winners with \$50 savings bonds. The grand-prize winners also received a new American flag from the PHS. All participants received certificates of achievement. The PHS is grateful to Mechanics Bank for its generosity in sponsoring this contest.

This year we had some

special participants.

A Collins Elementary School special education class taught by Julie Willis, with nine children with moderate to severe disabilities, submitted watercolor paintings that reflected the flag, rather than essays.

Continued on page 12

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WHERE TO FIND NEWSBRIEFS

Pick up your copy of Pinole Historical Society *Newsbriefs* at these locations:
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It's also posted on the PHS website.

FOR ADVERTISERS: More than 2,500 printed copies of *PHS Newsbriefs* are distributed every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database and website. If you're interested in advertising, please contact Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or call him at (510) 724-9507.

FUNDRAISING DINNER NOV. 12

The Pinole Historical Society will have a fundraising dinner Friday, Nov. 12, at La Strada, in San Pablo. More details will be in the fall issue of *Newsbriefs* and in your e-mail.

PHS CHANGES TO QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

The Pinole Historical Society is switching to quarterly membership meetings—rather than the monthly meetings we've had in the past.

We'll be supplementing the quarterly meetings with interesting activities, such as the recent walking tour of historic downtown Pinole, (see the front-page story), and events, such as the November 12 fundraising dinner and the Veterans' Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony.

Our meetings will be on the third Thursday in September, November, February, and May, at 6:30 p.m. in the Alex Clark Room of the Public Safety Facility, 880 Tennent Avenue. Our remaining meetings in 2010 will be on September 16 and November 18.

As always, we'll have an interesting program for attendees. Members and guests are welcome.

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President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

NEW ACTIVITIES FOR PHS MEMBERS

It is hard to believe that August is upon us and school will be starting soon. Didn't school just end? Where did the summer go?

The society is also beginning a new year. We reevaluated our general membership meeting schedule and we will be meeting quarterly now. Our next meeting will be September 16 in the Alex Clark room at 6:30 p.m. Check page 2 of this newsletter for the other meeting dates.

In lieu of monthly meetings, we plan to have special events and other activities to complement the membership meetings and keep our members active in the society.

Several of our board members have changed their titles. George Vincent, long-time resident historian, author of Pinole history books, and member of the PHS since its inception in 1973, has resigned from the board and is now a Director

Emeritus. He will continue to be a consultant, active lecturer and participant, and an adviser for our ongoing educational and television programs.

Jack Meehan, long-time active member of the society has, resigned as Director Emeritus, but will continue to be a consultant for us on procedural matters, Robert's Rules of Order, and our bylaws.

EXPANDED NEWSLETTER

We have had success acquiring new ads for our newsletter. We are very appreciative of the business community's interest in the history of Pinole and of their continuing support of the society. Several of our new ads are outside the borders of Pinole, which gives credence to our goal of being a "museum without borders." With the advertising expansion, we have increased the size of the newsletter to 16 pages and will publish more historical content.



Marcia Kalapus

The Pinole Library offered us space in May for an exhibit of our historical collections. The exhibit has been so well received by the public that we were not only offered an extension of our current display, but a second display case, too! There are now two PHS exhibits at the library. Check them out!

The PHS Board of Directors had a half-day planning session in July to plan for the next

year's events. We hope to have more walking tours, historical tours outside Pinole, fundraising events for our future museum, field trips, member appreciation events, and anything else that we can imagine to promote local history. We also hope to produce more books, as well as more TV documentaries about Pinole history and its citizens.

We would like to hear from the public. What historical activities would you like us to provide? Let us know.

CONTACT US

Do you have any stories or collections of artifacts from old Pinole that you would like to share? Please contact us. Perhaps we can use them in one of our future library displays.

And, remember to continue to tell your family stories and show your family pictures to the little ones—it's the best way to preserve your family's history.

Geoff Torretta

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Photos of the May 20 walking tour of historic downtown Pinole


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Flag Day Essay Contest exhibit



National Preservation Month exhibit

PINOLE LIBRARY HOSTING TWO PHS EXHIBITS

The Pinole Historical Society has two exhibits on display at the Pinole Library, side by side in two cases at the entrance to the main reading room.

The National Preservation Month exhibit was installed May 1. It has received so much attention that the librarian

asked the PHS if we would like to have an "indefinite" display.

Then, the PHS was offered the use of a second display case, just to the left of the one housing the National Preservation Month exhibit.

On July 9, an exhibit honoring Pinole schoolchildren who participated in the PHS Flag Day Essay

Contest opened. The exhibit, which includes books about the American flag that are available at the library, will run through September.

The PHS thanks the Pinole Library for the opportunity to bring the city's history to Pinole residents, and for helping us be a "museum without walls."

LIBRARY HOURS

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Back in the day

By George Vincent

CHINESE CLAM DIGGERS IN PINOLE 100 YEARS AGO

By the time Pinole was incorporated in June 1903, its 695 residents were accustomed to door-to-door merchants.

The Chinese, in particular, were a familiar sight among merchants of diverse ethnic backgrounds selling their wares from house to house.

One of the earliest peddlers was called Riley. He would come from San Francisco with fruits and vegetables in two baskets supported by a pole. Keeping his records on customer fence posts, Riley vended his wares between Pinole and Rodeo.

By the early 1920s, the Pinole waterfront

supported a small-but-industrious Chinese encampment. They leased the beach land from the Fernandez family.

Living in small houses on stilts, the Chinese dug clams from the shallow tidelands. The fresh clams were put into buckets hanging from poles, shouldered, and sold in the early morning to local townsfolk.

There was also a Chinese bunkhouse on the Fernandez wharf.

An itinerant Chinese merchant by the name of Sing Lee owned and operated a large boat in Pinole, and the clam beds between Atlas (Giant) Powder and the Pinole waterfront.

He gathered the clams in big fruit boxes to sell in the markets of Oakland and San Francisco.

Sing Lee would also sail to Red Rock in Richmond, where he fished, and sold his catch from doorstep to doorstep in Pinole, in competition with the Italians who sold herring.

By providing clams and fish to Pinole's citizens, the Chinese played a small, but important, role in the city's community life.

Today, grocery shopping means the chore of a long, but necessary, trip to the local supermarket.

However, there was a time in Pinole when

a knock at the door meant the store had come to you.

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It happened 50 years ago

HISTORY, OR THE “GOOD OLD DAYS,” MAY BE A HALF-CENTURY AGO, BUT LOTS OF PEOPLE REMEMBER 1960, WHEN:

- *The Apartment* wins Academy Award for Best Picture; Burt Lancaster (*Elmer Gantry*) and Elizabeth Taylor (*Butterfield 8*) win Best Actor and Best Actress, respectively
- Echo-IA, first communication satellite, is successfully launched
- Francis Gary Powers’s U-2 spy plane is shot down over Russia
- Harper Lee’s groundbreaking novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, is published
- Howdy Doody show ends after 13 years
- Domino’s Pizza debuts in Ypsilanti, Michigan

- Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev pounds his shoe in anger at United Nations

- Ohio State defeats California, 75-55, for the NCAA basketball championship

- Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* terrifies movie-goers and becomes one of the year’s most successful films

- House committee looks into radio “payola”; DJ Alan Freedman is among eight arrested

- Israelis kidnap Adolf Eichman from Argentina to Jerusalem

- John F. Kennedy wins presidency over Richard Nixon; Democrats sweep Congress

- Bill Mazeroski hits first Game 7 “walk-off” home run in World Series history as the Pirates defeat the Yankees, 10-9, to win the series, four games to three

- Henry Mancini’s “Moon River” is a hit ... ah, THAT was real music!



PHS interviews on city of Pinole website

Miss one of our programs on Pinole Community TV?

Not a problem. The city’s website now has a dedicated section devoted to PINOLE HISTORY on its “Videos Online” page.

You can view the numerous PHS programs right on your computer. Just go to www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY. You’ll find our interviews, Veterans’ Day programs, and the very fine PCTV-produced, 12-part series on the Historic Walking Tour.

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Back in the day

THE 'PLAGUE' PANICKED PINOLE IN 1918

By George R. Vincent

The "Great Influenza Pandemic" of 1918-1919 killed more people than the "Great War"—World War I.

It is estimated that between 40 million and 50 million people died worldwide, including 675,000 in the U.S. alone.

Also nicknamed the "Spanish Flu," the outbreak circled the globe in nine months, killing more than the four years of the Black Death—Bubonic Plague—of the 14th century.

Few cities and families in the U.S. were spared the flu's wrath, and Pinole was no exception.

In an age before knowledge of antibiotics

and viruses, the fear generated by the disease spread faster than the illness itself. Its victims were mainly the young between ages 20-40; the flu eventually affected 28% of all Americans.

Because of its severity and many deaths, the outbreak in Pinole was also called the "Plague." Pinole's newspaper of the day repeatedly urged citizens "to clean up their places to avoid the Plague."

In December 1918, there were 35 cases of influenza in its severest form in Pinole and Hercules, with many more mild cases.

Hercules was especially hard hit, with so many working at the Hercules Powder Company.

Continued on page 9



Masked Pinole and Hercules women on the grounds of the Hercules Powder Works, in front of the statue of Hercules, during the 1918 influenza "Plague." Many women worked in the shell factory packing explosives used in World War I. Pinole residents in this photo include Marie Hughes, Zelma Race, Catherine Dalton, Audrey Gerish, and Eugenia Jackson.

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THE 'PLAGUE' PANICKED PINOLE IN 1918

Continued from page 8

Dr. Manuel Fernandez, Pinole's town doctor and also the physician for the Hercules Powder Company, reportedly handled more flu cases than anyone in Contra Costa County.

FEAR OF DISEASE

Dr. Wetmore of the Hospital Association of Hercules also had a trying time caring for the large number of sick employees.

Weekly lists of flu fatalities and new outbreaks dominated the Pinole headlines, spreading the fear of the disease as well as the panic level. Victims died mainly from the flu's progression into pneumonia.

Among the dead was long-time Pinole resident George Sheppard of the Hercules Acid Department. Mrs. Henry Silva,

popular wife of Pinole's butcher, also died, as did 16 year-old James Mannory.

Among those seriously ill and confined to their homes were Margaret, Francis, Katie Ruff, Martin and Robert Collins, Mr. and Mrs. George Malone, Percy Stott and Mrs. A. LeFebvre.

Because the flu was spread by contact, citizens were urged to avoid groups and to wear gauze masks for protection.

A sense of public panic was evident.

SALOONS CLOSED

The Pinole Athletic and Outing Club postponed its dance in the Pinole Opera House for the second time due to the deaths of members. Even the town's many saloons were ordered closed until 7 p.m.

The town trustees worked hard to curb the

epidemic. The gauze-mask law was enforced due to the many townspeople neglecting to protect themselves.

MASKS REQUIRED

A health marshal and Constable Fraser were ordered "to the last ditch" to arrest any man, woman or child seen on the streets of Pinole without a mask. The first offense was a light fine, the second a heavy fine, and the third meant jail time.

Pinole life continued cautiously during World War I. Local soldiers wrote home from the front in France.

A United War Work Campaign, led by Miss Hazel Downer of the Bank of Pinole, tried to raise \$6,000 in donations.

The local theater showcased for 11 and 17 cents admission to

movies starring Fatty Arbuckle, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford.

OUTDOOR SERVICES

However, it was a frightening time when church services were held outdoors and few people ventured out and mingled unless necessary. Those who broke the Plague rules were chastised by a local editorial in December of 1918:

"Wear your mask religiously. Don't go out bragging about your fearlessness. Such bravery is all rot with a chip on your shoulder defying old death to knock it off.

"Better to hike to the end of the wharf (the Fernandez wharf at the waterfront), take a quiet shot at your ivory dome, tumble in the water, and float away."



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COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC PLANS

By **Tim Banuelos, Pinole City Councilman**

Second of two parts

Pinole's existing built environment sets the tone for future development. The rich architectural history that is indicative of the time period in which the Bay Area developed is also represented and specific to Pinole.

In planner language, this is called context. Context not only reflects on the various styles of the built environment but also on the size and shape of the individual elements of the built environment.

In future development the height and bulk of new buildings becomes important when striving to preserve a cohesive environment, sometimes more important than matching building styles. It is rare when a new building that is matching an existing style is successfully done—it is analogous with comparing a living human being with a mannequin.

The "Disneylandation" of towns such as ours that occurs when brand-new historic-looking buildings are built detracts and damages the community character and takes away from the buildings that have historic value.

In the Community Character Element, there are goals and policies set up "to protect the established historic and small-town character of Pinole and encourage the human-scaled design of buildings to complement the scale and character of existing buildings".

The intent is to have future developments reflect, not to match, the look and feel of the city's past. In this way the thread of history continues through careful and responsible design that is in concert with the existing historic built environment.

To reinforce Old Town's significance as the leading historic area in town, the Community Character Element suggests an Historic Preservation Ordinance be established with its own set of guidelines and requirements to maintain the heart of Pinole's identity and direct compatible development.



Tim Banuelos

There are also non-built elements within the Community Character Element that don't involve buildings. Maintaining an active cultural and performing arts presence adds to the identity of Pinole. This is currently accomplished through the various programs such as the plays put on by the School of Performing Arts, Youth and Senior Center functions, the concerts

in the park, and the classic car show.

The Community Character Element also suggests a Public Arts Commission be formed to direct these activities. Included in this would be the establishment of a permanent museum to hold the historic artifacts that tell the story of Pinole's history.

Perhaps bringing back parades and holding events such as Pinole Community Day will encourage an additional feeling of community that was enjoyed by Pinole residents in years past.

This urge for community awareness is already being reflected in the increased attendance at the Pinole Historical Society meetings. The combination of these activities is what makes Pinole special.

Pinole in the recent past has been called a bedroom community, but it is really more than that. There is definitely a "there" here—it didn't suddenly drop in place like some cities around us, and it hasn't been paved over and Walmarted.

There is a rich tradition, both in the built and un-built environment, and in the people who live here—it is what defines us all.

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ATTORNEYS

FLY THE AMERICAN FLAG EVERY DAY? WHO, ME?

We've seen the list of holidays on which we should fly our American flag on our home fronts. There's a dozen or more.

But, ever wonder why just those days? Is there something "unspecial" about all the other days? Might we be ashamed to display the flag every day? Does that embarrass our neighbors, or signify something only far out citizens might interpret? Or, how about non-citizen neighbors? (No, I don't mean "illegals"!)



Consider this:
The American flag is flown every day (when they're open) at the post office, at city hall, at our schools, at McDonalds/Carl's Jr./Wendy's, etc. And (bless him!) on Joe Mariotti's hill above I-80, and visible for miles!

Are all these patriotic displays just surrogates for individual homeowners/citizens? I don't think so, and I think we miss an opportunity to assert our individual pride in our country.

Fly the American flag EVERY DAY—and fear not that it's out all night; after all, it was that "star spangled banner" that lasted all night at Fort McHenry in 1814.

— Jack Meehan



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FLAG DAY ESSAY CONTEST A HIT WITH TEACHERS

Continued from front

"I understand that the children would not be eligible for prizes," Julie wrote to the PHS. "My goal is for them to participate in a community event."

The students received certificates of achievement at a school assembly, and one of the children's paintings is on display at the Pinole Library.

Photos, a complete list of all the participants, and the winning contest essays are on the PHS website (www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org).

The essay contest has been one of our more rewarding endeavors in promoting history to the public, which is part of our mission statement. An exhibit celebrating the achievements of the students who participated in the Flag Day Essay Contest may be viewed at the Pinole Library.

The contest has proved to be meaningful to



Collins Elementary School teacher Julie Willis's (far left) special education class, with (L-R) Mechanics Bank Community Affairs Officer Fernanda Rodrigues, Mechanics Bank Chairman Emeritus Ed Downer III, and Pinole Mayor Debbie Long.

educators. St. Joseph School Principal Arlene Marseille, wrote to us following this year's awards ceremony at her school:

"I am very proud of our students for their participation in this event. It shows they understand the history and importance of the flag that is displayed over our school every day, and what it takes to be allowed the freedom to do so."

In 2009, the PHS received this note from Carol Butcher, principal at Stewart Elementary School, after an awards assembly:

"I am so proud of them (the students)

and I think this is great! They will be so pleased and I so love it when our kids are recognized for their merits. I think it's important for the kids to be involved and not only support their fellow students but to see the interaction and support of the community."

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The Pinole Historical Society promotes awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicles the city's heritage for current and future generations.

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We have a supply of postcards, greeting cards, and refrigerator magnets—featuring photos from our book, *Images of America: Pinole*. They are gorgeous!

They're for sale at the PHS booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market; we're there every other Saturday, next to The Flower Cart booth.

We have an order form for our products on our website: www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org. Because of the cost of credit-card processing services, we accept only checks via mail order. To order on-line, print the order form and mail it with your check to the Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564.

Also, we have a booth at the **Summer Sounds in the Park** concert series beginning every Thursday through August 26, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.



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YOU'VE GOT A QUESTION? WE'VE GOT AN ANSWER

Pinole has a long and interesting history. Is there something you'd like to know about the city or its people?

Send the Pinole Historical Society a question and we'll not only answer it, but we'll print it in the next issue of *Newsbriefs* so everyone will be informed.

And, if we don't know, we'll find out.

For example, perhaps you ran across a photo at a garage sale and want to have the people or buildings in it identified. Or, maybe you're wondering about that light-green, two-story house on San Pablo Avenue, opposite the post office.

Send your photos and questions to us at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.



Check the Pinole Historical Society website for information on PHS activities and events – and, of course, the history of the sweetest city in the East Bay.
www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

THIS QUARTER'S QUESTION:

Q: Why are the cross streets off Tennent named after fruits?
– *Sent by a recent homeowner in the fine city of Pinole, who lives walking distance to said fruit-named streets.*

A: The Dr. Samuel J. Tennent family owned all of the land on the west side of Pinole Valley Road, from about where the bowling alley is to San Pablo Avenue. This was from the 1850s to the turn of the 20th century. They grew pears, plums, prunes, and peaches. The streets are named after the Tennents' orchards.



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NEWSBRIEFS EXPANDS TO 16 PAGES

Did you notice that this issue of Newsbriefs is 16 pages? We had to expand; we have so many advertisers that we were running out of room for articles in our 12-page format.

As long as we have this number of advertisers, we'll keep the newsletter this size.

The PHS thanks all of the businesses for their support, and welcomes these new advertisers:

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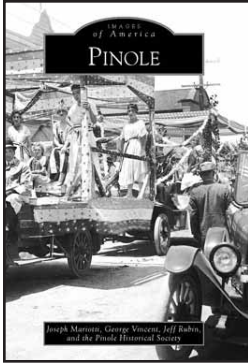


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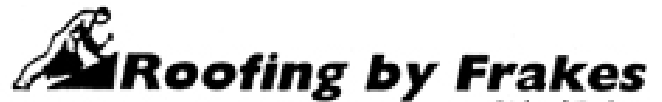
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