# Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

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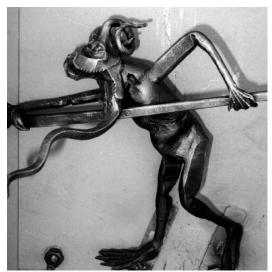
#### September 8 program

## FINDING THE BAY BRIDGE TROLL

he historic bridges of the Bay Area and popular folklore surrounding those bridges — with an emphasis on the Bay Bridge Troll — will be the subject of noted author John Robinson's presentation at the September 8 Pinole Historical Society meeting.

The program, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road, is FREE to PHS members and the public. Refreshments will be served.

Robinson's fascination with bridges has led him to write eight books, including "Spanning the Strait: Building the Alfred Zampa Memorial Bridge," "Building the Benicia-Martinez Bridge," and "Bridging the Tacoma



Narrows." His latest book, "Bay Bridge Troll," will be published in November.

The Bay Bridge Troll is an 18-inch steel figure, complete with a spud wrench, that was welded to the Eastern span of the original San Francisco Bay Bridge. It was replaced by a newer version in 2013 once the construction of the new Bay Bridge was completed.

The creator of the original troll, Bill Roan, is a blacksmith-turned-Continued on page 2

# In this issue

**President's Message Pinole Garden Club beautifies the city** 

— Page 3 —

*In memoriam* Robert "Duke" Dutra

— Page 6 —

George Vincent
A Fernandez Night
to Remember

Page 8 —

Local history books for sale

- Pages 12 and 14 -

PHS membership application

Page 15 —

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It's also posted on the PHS website (click on NEWSLETTER in the menu bar).

**FOR ADVERTISERS:** 2,000 printed copies of *PHS Newsbriefs* are distributed every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole and West County residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database and website.

If you're interested in advertising, contact Jeff Rubin at *info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org* or (510) 724-9507.

## PHS CALENDAR

#### **ONGOING**

**September 8 program:** "Finding the Bay Bridge Troll." Author John Robinson highlights historic Bay Area bridges and the iconic Bay Bridge Troll, a memento from the ironworkers who built the bridge. The public is invited to this FREE event from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanante Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road. Refreshments will be served.

**August 9, Sept. 13, Oct. 11: Monthly Board of Directors meeting.** The public is invited to attend and speak on any of the items discussed at these meetings. Pinole Senior Center, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

**PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market.** We are at the farmers' market every other Saturday from April through December. Please stop by and say hello.

# Pinole Historical Society

**Board of Directors:** Jeff Rubin, President; George Vincent, Vice President; Mary McMains, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Melissa Lawton, Norma Martínez-Rubin, Carol White. **Directors Emeritus**: Marcia Kalapus, Jack Meehan. **Newsletter Editor**: Jeff Rubin.

#### 2017 PHS MEETING DATES

**November 3:** "Traveling the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail," presented by the National Park Service.

All meetings are held from 6:30-8 p.m. in conference rooms 2A and 2B of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Building, 1301 Pinole Valley Road.

For more information, call (510) 724-9507, e-mail info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org, or visit our website at www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org.

### FINDING THE BAY BRIDGE TROLL

Continued from front artist who lived near the Bay Bridge.

In 1989, a section of the Bay Bridge collapsed during the Loma-Prieta



The troll on the old eastern span of the Bay Bridge.

earthquake that rocked the Bay Area. The bridge was closed for several weeks while repairs were made.

When the repairs to the bridge were nearly complete, ironworkers smuggled the small metal troll onto the bridge and welded it permanently to a steel beam on the north side of the bridge.

This unusual topping

out ceremony became the subject of much curiosity and rumor around the Bay Area.

The troll was placed where motorists on the bridge would never see it. It was on the north side of the outside rail, where only maintenance workers and ironworkers ever venture.

# President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

# GARDEN CLUB BEAUTIFIES PINOLE

mall towns are all about community.

From Pinole's early fraternal and religious groups in the first half of the 20th century, to the service groups that have existed for 75 to 100 or more years, these groups, and the people who carry out the good work that they do, form the identity of our community.

When it comes to beautifying the city, no one can hold a pruning shear next to the Pinole Garden Club.

Its mission is to promote and encourage the knowledge and appreciation of gardening among members and to take an active part in civic beautification and the protection and the conservation of our natural resources.

Since its establishment in 1956, the Pinole Garden Club has more than lived its mission. It's activities include Arbor Day tree planting; decorating the Christmas Tree and setting up the Candy Cane Contest at the Pinole Library; performing a skit for local schools, "A Tree Grows in Pinole"; doing bi-monthly garden therapy at a local nursing home; and fundraisers.

Another project is sprucing up the Jessie Howe Clark Memorial Garden on Tennent Avenue by the Pinole Public Safety Facility and City Hall. Jessie was Pinole's historian and Poet Laureate years ago. Club members will have the tree pruned and clean up the area under the tree, working in conjunction with the City of Pinole.

Jeff Rubin

The club has also weeded, pruned, and periodically replanted the garden area surrounding the City of Pinole Welcome Wall near the entrance to I-80 on Pinole Valley Road to keep it looking beautiful.

And, not coincidentally, the Pinole Historical Society is indebted to the garden club for lovingly taking care of the Faria House rose garden, which will one day be the entrance to the Pinole History Museum.

The members have deadheaded, pruned, and maintained the rose bushes every month since 2013.

The club gives back to the community in other ways, too. Each year the club awards two scholarships to deserving students for their horticultural studies at a local college.

Continued on page 4



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# President's Message

Continued from page 3

Through its participation in these and other local projects, the Pinole Garden Club contributes to the improvement of our community and our environment.

Black and white photos do not do the club's work justice, so the Pinole Historical Society will run a number of color photos highlighting their work in the August 1 issue of its online newsletter, PHS E-News. You can find it online at www.pinolehistoricalsociety.org/ENews. htm.



Pinole Garden Club members at the Faria House (L-R): Sally Dunham, Amy Tafoya, Margaret Gelhaus, Pat Bennett, Carole Person, Ann Heintz, Judy Dadisman, Margaret Young, Emmy Swenson, and Marcia Joswick.



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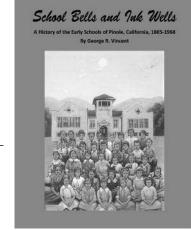
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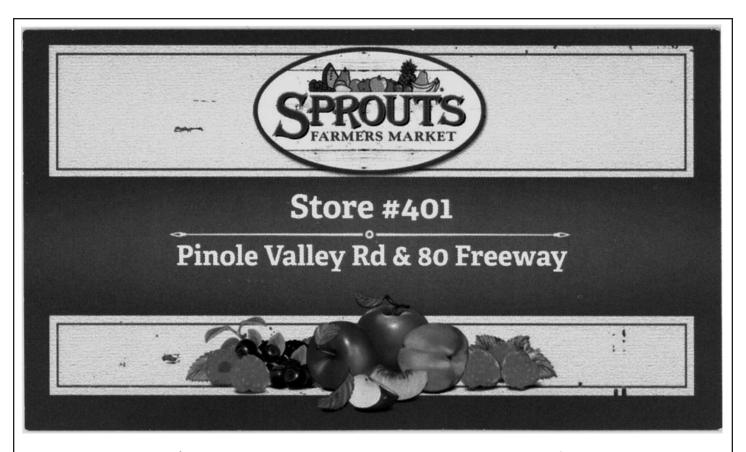
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Pinole, CA

# In memoríam

Robert "Duke" Dutra December 8, 1931 – June 11, 2017 Age 86

Lifetime Pinole resident Robert "Duke" Dutra died at his Pinole home on June 11. Bob hailed from vintage Pinole times, knew everyone in town, and always gave a friendly greeting to the many friends he had on the streets of Pinole.

The Dutras were early Pinole pioneers with a great love of their community. Bob's parents were George and Marie (Nunes) Dutra. His father was a longtime banker in town and for many years the city's treasurer.

Bob attended local schools, was a volunteer fireman in Pinole, and eventually became a full-time firefighter in Pinole for more than 25 years, retiring as a captain. In his early years, he lived directly across from the fire house on Plum Street and was usually the first one at the station when the fire siren blared from atop Louis Roof's store.

Bob was married to his childhood sweetheart, Dayce Collins, for more than 66 years. The couple enjoyed the outdoors, especially their mountain-home retreat in Wyoming. Bob enjoyed hunting and fishing there, as well as frequenting the Pinole bay waterfront for duck hunting and striped-bass fishing.

Bob is survived by his wife, Dayce, son Gerald Dutra, and brother, Marvin Dutra. A son, Jimmy Dutra, and a grandson, Jerry Dutra, preceded Bob's passing. He is also survived by two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Bob came into the world at Cottage Hospital in Richmond and was undoubtedly delivered to his happy parents by Dr. Manuel Fernandez. Bob was a familiar mainstay in Pinole and will be deeply missed in the town he was raised in and loved.



Robert Dutra



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# Back in the day

George R. Vincent

## A FERNANDEZ NIGHT TO REMEMBER

hat a delightful evening it was when Susan Fernandez gave the May 12 PHS program about her greatgrandfather, Bernardo Fernandez.

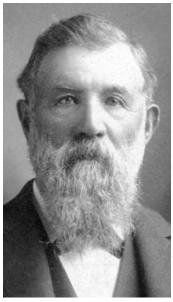
A standing-room-only audience was treated to a presentation glowing with family pride. We were given a fresh and very personal glimpse into the family history and dealings of Pinole's foremost founding pioneer.

So much of the family lineage was shared; the generations had one thing in common — a love of the community of Pinole and its townsfolk.

One notable descendant of Bernardo and

Carlotta Fernandez was their fifth child, Manuel.

Manuel was to have three children of his own.

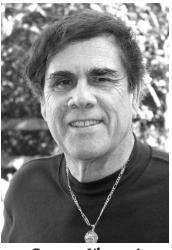


Bernardo Fernandez in 1900, age 70

Susan Fernandez is the eldest of nine children of Manuel's son, Carroll, and his wife, Annie Enos.

Manuel Fernandez was a physician and surgeon in Pinole and the area's doctor for 47 years. He brought most of Pinole into the world and kindly attended to their departures as well. His medical ledgers read like a census of the health histories of early Pinole's residents.

In 1929, he delivered my sister, Verla Vincent, at Cottage Hospital in Richmond. He delivered me at the old Richmond Hospital with a billing for delivery and stay of \$40. Dr. Fernandez also did the age-five ritual of removing my tonsils.



George Vincent

If you needed a doctor day or night, he came to your door. Dr. Fernandez performed so many benevolent and compassionate acts for Pinole's citizens that some referred to him as "Saint Manuel." For instance, in 1908 he pumped a handcar along the Southern Pacific Railroad Tracks to reach injured passengers in a train derailment a mile away.

In 1918, both Pinole and Hercules were hit hard by the Spanish Flu Continued on page 9



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# A FERNANDEZ NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Continued from page 8

epidemic. Dr. Fernandez tirelessly cared for the sick and dealt with prevention techniques to prevent more fatalities. He was also the company doctor for the Hercules Powder Company.

As a youngster growing up in Pinole in the 1800s, Manuel Fernandez attended Pinole's first school, the Fitzgerald Ranch School, on First Avenue (Appian Way today).

He was an honor student as a 7th-grader in Miss Mary Kelly's one-room schoolhouse in 1884.

In 1882, his father, Bernardo Fernandez, held a public picnic at his huge bayside warehouse, providing all the food to benefit the school fund.

Manuel went on to U.C. Berkeley to medical school. While there in



Manuel Fernandez in 1900

1894, he joined with the new Southern Pacific station agent, E.M. Downer, to publish Pinole's first newspaper, *The Pinole Weekly Times*.

Now Dr. M.L. Fernandez, he opened his first medical offices in San Francisco in 1904-1905.

After the April 18, 1906, earthquake, he

joined with other doctors in the ruined city to care for the injured in Golden Gate Park's "Tent City," delivering babies as well.

After the 1906 quake, young Dr. Fernandez returned to Pinole. His first office was in the Fernandez Mansion. In 1917, he met and married Pinole newcomer, Bernice Burch. She came to Pinole from Chanute, Kansas, when her father became the city's new druggist in 1913.

They first lived in the Fernandez Mansion, until building a large new home on a rocky knoll above Tennent Avenue, close to the Santa Fe Railroad tracks.

Mrs. Fernandez recalled they had to dynamite rocks out before the foundation

could be laid, and how scarce and expensive building materials were in 1917 during the World War I years. Stone and brick pillars guarded the top and bottom entrances of the home and are still visible today.

As a paperboy in the 1950s, I recall how hard it was peddling up their winding road. I was always attacked by their cocker spaniels, one black and one blonde, as I delivered their paper to a gorgeous home facing the bay, surrounded by oak, pine, and redwood trees.

The early years of their marriage found the couple traveling to far-away countries. They sent letters home describing their adventures that

Continued on page 10

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# A FERNANDEZ NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Continued from page 9

were published in the Pinole Weekly Times.

Manuel and Bernice had three children, Bernardo, Carroll, and Charlotte. For many years their devoted housekeeper, Lilly Finnigan, cared for the family.

In 1916, Dr. Fernandez relocated his practice to downtown Pinole in his old friend's new brick building, the Downer Building on Main Street. It had no elevator, and patients had to trudge up long flights of dark stairs. The old building was badly damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and was demolished.

Dr. Fernandez also had a vision to make Pinole a better place to live. In the 1930s, his family donated the land for a central city park that would become Fernandez Park.

In 1938, during the Depression years, he opened a large tract of Fernandez land near his home for development called Buena Vista Heights. This was to be Pinole's first subdivision with Spanish-style model homes. In the early 1950s, the family sold the pasture acreage by the bay for the next subdivision, called Normandy Acres.

The busy doctor retired in 1947 and died in his home in 1954. Mrs. Fernandez lived in her home with caretaker Lilly Finnegan until she died on February 4, 1978.

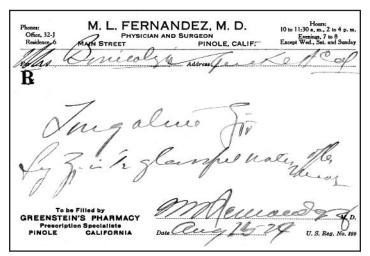
Mrs. Fernandez, like her husband, was always



Dr. Fernandez and his wife, Bernice, in 1940.

interested in Pinole affairs and community service.

She was voted Woman of the Year in 1966 for her charitable works with



Dr. Manuel Fernandez wrote this prescription in 1929. Dr. Fernandez's office was on the second floor of the Downer Building, next to the Bank of Pinole. Greenstein's Pharmacy was on the first floor. Manuel's future wife, Bernice Burch, was the daughter of the druggist at the pharmacy. The Downer Building was heavily damaged during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and was subsequently demolished.

the Youth Memorial Building.

She loved Pinole's history. In 1968, Bernice was appointed by the City Council as a member of the new Pinole Historical and Museum Commission, the forerunner of the Pinole Historical Society.

The Fernandez family has given much to their community. At one time, Dr. Fernandez's brother, Thomas, was in charge of the family estate. He generously offered a large parcel of land, free, for the building of a Veterans' Hospital. But the offer was never taken up.

Pinole's nomenclature is still dotted with Fernandez titles.

We have the Fernandez Mansion, Fernandez Avenue, Fernandez Park, Fernandez-donated stained glass windows in St. Joseph's Church, and most recently, the John Muir Land Trust's (JMLT) Fernandez Ranch trails.

Susan Fernandez gave a fitting tribute to the lasting legacy of her family name when she addressed a large crowd at the dedication ceremony of the opening of the JMLT's Fernandez Ranch trails on June 3, 2017.

Susan grew up in the now-abandoned ranch home overlooking Franklin Canyon. She told the audience, "Remember, when you walk and enjoy these trails, you are walking in my backyard."

The Fernandez family for generations has shared its backyard with Pinoleans, as well as the talents and generosity of its sons and daughters.

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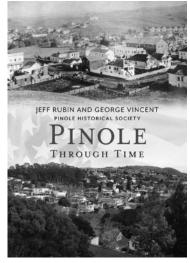




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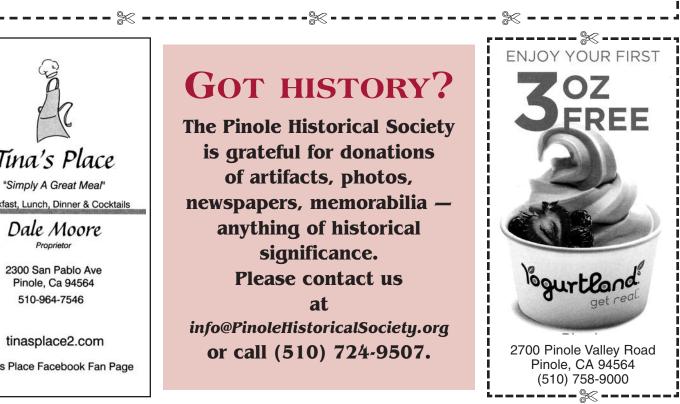
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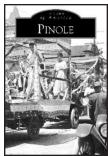
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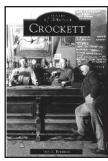












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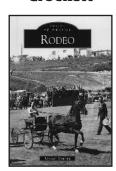
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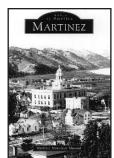
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Memberships are for the 2017 calendar year (except Lifetime memberships)

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