

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org

— ORA WEBBER 1919-2020 —

CITY COUNCIL PAYS TRIBUTE TO POPULAR SWIMMING TEACHER

The Pinole City Council recognized the contributions of one of its most well-known citizens on November 17 when it issued a proclamation honoring the life of longtime swimming coach Ora Webber, who died last spring at the age of 100.

Born Dec. 6, 1919, Ora was the longtime owner of the Greenbrae Swimming School, in the backyard of her Tennent Avenue home. Beginning in 1963, she taught several generations of Pinole residents — from toddlers to firefighters.

"Ora Webber was a Pinole icon," said Pinole Mayor Norma Martínez-Rubin. "She probably taught every child in Pinole how to swim. She lived a long, remarkable life. The city is proud to honor her life and present this proclamation to her family."



Ora Webber

"May we all live such a meaningful life, and be such a positive influence on the public."

"I, plus three of my four siblings, learned how to swim at Greenbrae Pool," said Councilmember Maureen Toms. "She taught a whole generation of Pinole youth how to swim. Hers was the go-to place. She was a unique and wonderful citizen."



Proclamation

HONORING

ORA WEBBER

WHEREAS, Ora Anneva Moneymaker Webber was born on December 6, 1919, on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation at Genesee, Idaho, one of 13 children of Elizabeth Mertens Moneymaker and Ora Alexander Moneymaker; and

WHEREAS, Ora's maternal grandfather, Christian Mertens, didn't want to be conscripted into Kaiser Wilhelm's German army during World War I and immigrated with family members to the United States and settled in St. Louis, Missouri; and

WHEREAS, Ora's parents met near Mansfield, Washington, where their families had settled on free land offered by the United States government to any and all qualified citizens who would homestead the land; and

WHEREAS, Ora Webber and her husband lived in Pinole on Tennent Avenue, where Ora opened the Greenbrae Swimming School in 1963; and

WHEREAS, Ora Webber taught several generations of Pinole residents, from small children to adults, how to swim and to be confident in and out of the water; and

WHEREAS, Ora Webber earned the respect, admiration, and love of her students; and

WHEREAS, Ora Webber died in the spring of 2020 at the age of 100, and was one of our oldest-known residents.

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, NORMA MARTINEZ-RUBIN, Mayor of the City of Pinole, County of Contra Costa, State of California, on behalf of the City of Pinole, extend this city's most heartfelt recognition of the life of **ORA WEBBER**, and the contributions she made to the people of the City of Pinole, and encourage all residents to applaud her achievements, and extend to her family and friends the City's thanks for a life well lived.*

Norma Martínez-Rubin

NORMA MARTINEZ-RUBIN
Mayor of the City of Pinole

Dated: December 15, 2020



Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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Newsbriefs 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.

**Call to see if business is open.

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

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Board of Directors: Jeff Rubin, President; Mary McMains, Treasurer; Jo Ann Gannotti, Secretary; Norma Martínez-Rubin, Carol White.

Directors Emeritus: Marcia Kalapus, Jack Meehan, George Vincent. **Newsletter Editor:** Jeff Rubin.

PHS at Pinole Farmers' Market

The Pinole Historical Society has suspended its booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market until it is safe to be engaging with the public. We are hopeful this will be by the summer of 2021.

We miss our market friends; we love to chat, and love hearing stories of people's lives growing up in Pinole. Let us know how you're doing. Email us at info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org.

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President's Message

Jeff Rubin, President, Pinole Historical Society

NEW YEAR BRINGS OPTIMISM FOR MUSEUM CREATION

We know 2020 was an incredibly difficult year. The Pinole History Museum board of directors hopes you are doing well, are safe, and are optimistic that 2021 will be a better year.

While we were disappointed the Pinole City Council did not approve the renovation of the historic Faria House and a lease to the Pinole History Museum in November 2020, this will be considered again by the council in 2021. We are hopeful the renovation and lease will be approved so work to establish the Pinole History Museum in the Faria House can begin.

We are proceeding on a timeline that we hope will see the museum open sometime in 2023 — in time to celebrate “Birth of a City” — our first planned major exhibit and year-long series of programs commemorating the 200th anniversary of the land grant that created the City of Pinole.

Pinole was carved from the 17,786-acre El Pinole Grant awarded to Don Ygnacio Martinez, a soldier in the Mexican army, in 1823 (map at below right). He chose to build his home, which he named Rancho El Pinole, in the area that is now occupied by Pinole Valley Park.

We are planning a diverse selection of exhibits and programs that will serve all ages and cultures, as reflected in the demographics of our city.

The museum's spacious backyard is planned to be utilized as an events location for community, corporate, and private events that will contribute to civic pride and serve as a funding source to sustain museum operations.

Amid the still-unfolding human and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of saving local history appears no less urgent.

Pinole's history can disappear from mainstream radar and from

people's memories without a home for the artifacts and oral stories that define our city in all its diversity.

As a supporter of the Pinole History Museum, you are at the forefront of preserving the nearly 200-year history of Pinole and the important stories told by the city's ancestors.

The Pinole History Museum welcomes your



Jeff Rubin

continued support to protect the documentation of past and present people and events.

You can help make the Pinole History Museum a
Continued on page 4



**Visit the museum website at
PinoleHistoryMuseum.org**



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Please consider adding a gift in your will or trust and become a part of the restoration of the Faria House and the establishment of the Pinole History Museum. Please call your attorney for advice.

NEW YEAR BRINGS OPTIMISM FOR BETTER TIMES

Continued from page 3

reality by writing to the members of the Pinole City Council to let them know how important you believe a museum would be to the city. You can write to them c/o the City of Pinole, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole, CA 94564, or email them at:

Mayor Norma Martínez-Rubin:
nmartinez-rubin@ci.pinole.ca.us

Mayor Pro Tem Vincent Salimi:
vsalimi@ci.pinole.ca.us

Councilmember Devin Murphy:
dmurphy@ci.pinole.ca.us

Councilmember Anthony Tave:
atave@ci.pinole.ca.us

Councilmember Maureen Toms:
mtoms@ci.pinole.ca.us

We're not actively asking for donations now, not until we have a home and a lease. We just want you to know how grateful we are for your support, especially now, as we experience an extraordinary period of history in real time.

As the Pinole History Museum board strives to create a permanent place of honor for the city's history, doing so reinforces our awareness of our mission, which is: *to collect, preserve, and exhibit relevant archives and objects that represent Pinole's history and culture. Museum exhibits and research opportunities serve to educate and inspire Pinole residents' community affiliation and civic pride. Through stewardship and accessibility of our past and present, we hope to enhance our community's future.*

Put My Experience and Knowledge to Work For You

Having the right connections in the community makes all the difference. I grew up in the Pinole-Hercules area, where my ancestors settled more than 150 years ago, some farming the fertile soils from Pinole to Rodeo, while others helped build the communities we now call home. The benefits of my longstanding connection to and detailed knowledge of the community are the foundation for the outstanding service I deliver to my clients.



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Thank you for endorsing the creation the Pinole History Museum. Be well, stay safe. Happy New Year to you and your family.

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Pinole History Museum mission statement

The Pinole History Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits relevant archives and objects that represent Pinole's history and culture. Museum exhibits and research opportunities serve to educate and inspire Pinole residents' community affiliation and civic pride. Through stewardship and accessibility of our past and present, we hope to enhance our community's future.

PHS YouTube CHANNEL YOUR SOURCE FOR PINOLE HISTORY

Pinole Historical Society
18 subscribers • 38 videos

2011 Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Pinole
Pinole Historical Society • 6 views • 1 week ago
Pinole Historical Society co-founder and historian George Vincent spins tales of old Pinole.

The Pinole Mural
Pinole Historical Society • 5 views • 1 week ago
Wells Fargo Bank produced this video about the history of Pinole. The mural hangs in the bank's Pinole office on Fitzgerald Drive.

Pinole History
zylofmin
Lift Bridges of the Bay Area • 37:50
Santa Fe and SP trains pass at Pinole, CA. 7/29/1999 • 1:36
VIEW FULL PLAYLIST

View from Above: The Pinole History Museum
Pinole Historical Society • 42 views • 2 weeks ago
Future home of the Pinole History Museum. Original music by Alex Jason.

Faria Sisters Interview - Pinole Historical Society
Pinole Historical Society • 60 views • 3 years ago
Long time residents talk about growing up in Pinole.

Growing Up Pinole
Pinole Historical Society • No views • 1 week ago
Longtime Pinole residents talk about their lives in Pinole from childhood to adulthood.

Looking for a good local history program to watch? Look no further than the Pinole Historical Society's YouTube channel, created by Pinole History Museum board member Alec Jason.

Alex reformatted a decade's worth of PHS programs and uploaded them to our YouTube channel. Among the 30-plus videos include:

- **George Vincent's** two walking tours of historic downtown Pinole.
- **The Pinole Mural:** Wells Fargo Bank produced this video about the history of Pinole. The mural hangs in the bank's Pinole office on Fitzgerald Drive.
- **1963, 1963, and 1964 Fiesta del Pinole parades,** courtesy of PHS member Jim Payne.
- **An Interview With Two Mayors:** Former mayors Jack Meehan and Tom Cutino spin political tales and how they saved Fitzgerald Drive — and the sales-tax dollars its shopping centers produce — for Pinole.
- **What's in a Name?:** How Pinole streets got their names, and the characters behind those names.

Just go to YouTube and enter **PNOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY** in the search bar.

We'd be grateful if you gave our videos a THUMBS UP! Thank you.



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Life in the time of Covid

BUSINESS OWNERS OPTIMISTIC 2021 WILL BE A BETTER YEAR

How has Covid-19 affected Pinole businesses? What do they see for 2021?

Newsbriefs asked some of its advertisers about 2020 — and their thoughts about 2021. Their comments have been edited for space.

(NOTE: Pinole Paws and House of Lilith remain closed per state orders.)

HOW DIFFICULT WAS 2020 FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

• Very difficult. I went from having 25-30 clients a week to about 5-10. (Michelle Gonzalez, Massage by Michelle)

• There were lots of challenges in the real estate market! No open houses with lots of viewers, no flyers to pass out — everything is virtual (tours, brochures, even document signing). But, challenges bring opportunities, and as we learned the technology and how to use it in the industry, we ended the year strong. (Scott Tuffnell, Office Manager, Windermere Rowland Realty)



Angela Schneider

• It was definitely a struggle both mentally and financially. Having to close and not knowing when I'd be able to reopen left me with an abundance of time to ride the emotional roller-coaster of fear, anger, and finally, surrender. Listening to friends and peers voicing their struggles was hard too, as many were/are in far more dire straits than me. (Angela Schneider, House of Lilith Hair Designers)

• It was scary in March and April. Then I got an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) grant and later a loan, in case I needed backup funds, and that made me



Michelle Gonzalez

breathe easier! Then Mechanics Bank came through with a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan in May that really saved the farm. The final blessing was Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits, which are ongoing! Who

knew this would go on SO LONG? (Deborah Jordan, Pinole Paws)

WHAT ADJUSTMENTS DID YOU MAKE TO STAY IN BUSINESS?

• I had to start doing some home visits, which are very time consuming. I made sure to wear my mask while in my office as well as wipe down everything after each client. (Michelle Gonzalez)

• The National Association of Realtors put out safe practices guidelines following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) protocols. That means no visitors (agents and deliveries only, we meet clients elsewhere) social distancing, and mandatory mask-wearing in the

Continued on page 9

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BUSINESS OWNERS OPTIMISTIC 2021 WILL BE A BETTER YEAR

Continued from page 8 office. We show homes virtually whenever possible, and do lots of Zoom meetings. (Scott Tuffnell)

- Business had dropped to almost 25% in the first few weeks of the shutdown, though it went up to about 50% of our previous business level eventually. Most customers are locals getting take-home food for the family; we aren't doing much business for large corporate meetings anymore. (Jennifer Cote, The New Deli)

- I closed the business but have slowly opened back up. I discontinued my advertisement in the Marketplace permanently. I now meet folks outside, with everyone wearing masks and following all protocols. (Debbie Ojeda, Saving Memories)

- I Zoomed with my employees to see how they were doing, then in late May we met in person at the shop with our masks. By that time I had sourced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for everyone, found good cleaning supplies, and we all had a pizza/deep-clean party. We rearranged our workstations so everyone could physically distance. I, being the oldie, moved myself to the front of the shop, a whole wall between me and everyone else. We have yet to unlock our front door, but meet clients for pet drop-off and pick-up in the parking lot. (Deborah Jordan)

- Staying in contact with my customers and keeping them updated

on closures/openings, as well as selling hair-care products curbside. Also, I did some Zoom hair cutting tutorials to help people get through till I could serve them in person. (Angela Schneider)

- We implemented health and safety protocols with our guys so we could go out and perform our services in the safest way possible. We need to be sure we get our job done in a safe



Deborah Jordan



Debbie Ojeda

manner, as a good portion of our business is being in people's homes or businesses in close proximity of the customers and their families. (Rob Baldwin, Kel-Aire)

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH AND OVERCOME?

- The constant fluctuation of clients has me focusing more on products that I sell as well

as looking for alternative work. (Michelle Gonzalez)

- We had to get creative in contacting potential clients and assure them it was safe to work with us. (Scott Tuffnell)


- Our challenge has been to continue handling the workload with the minimum staff we

Continued on page 10

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BUSINESS OWNERS OPTIMISTIC 2021 WILL BE A BETTER YEAR

Continued from page 9

have, but it's been working. (Jennifer Cote)

• Scheduling lighter workloads so we didn't have too many clients arriving at one time, which was really hard at first, because after 2 1/2 months all our clients wanted to bring their doggies NOW! (Deborah Jordan)

• I didn't have employees to worry about. I was able to easily set up a new set of safety/sanitation protocols for when

we could re-open. (Angela Schneider)

• Some of the challenges have been keeping ourselves and our customers safe, along with limited access to equipment, as plants and warehouses were either shut down or limited to production or shipping. (Rob Baldwin)

WHAT NEW WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS DID YOU IMPLEMENT?

• ZOOM has become a daily communication tool, just like my cell phone and email. I spend



Scott Tuffnell

25% of my day on Zoom calls. (Scott Tuffnell)

• We didn't need to remove menu items, but we did streamline our Soup of the Day choice to split pea soup, or occasionally, tomato soup. (Jennifer Cote)

• My business has always been more of a service. I just plan to continue with whatever business God sends my way. (Debbie Ojeda)

• I just concentrated on safety, making sure protocols were being followed and clients understood why we had to change some things. No more walk-in nail appointments, for example. I also decided to invest in cloud-based scheduling software, so we all can know the schedule on our phones wherever we are. (Deborah Jordan)

• Even though I couldn't be open to perform hair services, I realized that I could be open to sell retail. So, I decided to go through my collection of vintage clothing and accessories and create a vintage boutique by appointment only. This shift in my business model not only put a few bucks in my pocket, it helped me de-clutter. (Angela Schneider)

Continued on page 11



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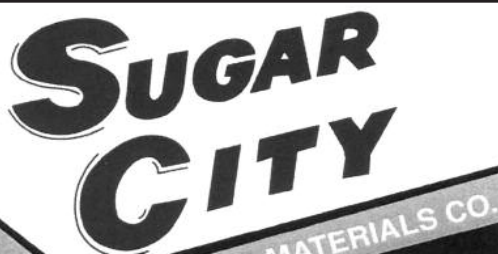
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Though we do not have a museum, we have two exhibit spaces at the Pinole Library, and our volunteers conduct history programs for service organizations, retirement residences, and schools. Artifacts are an important part of these programs.

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BUSINESS OWNERS OPTIMISTIC 2021 WILL BE A BETTER YEAR

Continued from page 10

WAS THERE ANYTHING POSITIVE IN 2020?

- We managed to increase the number of transactions in our office by 7% over the previous year. *(Scott Tuffnell)*
- I have enjoyed being more hands-on with food preparation, as staff was reduced so much. I previously had more office work — invoicing and work-order prep. Not anymore! *(Jennifer Cote)*
- I have enjoyed having more time. And, I have been able to replace some equipment thanks to the help of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. *(Deborah Jordan)*
- The thing that stands out the most in my mind and heart is how amazingly generous people were to me. People really wanted to see me and my salon survive this pandemic. The relation-



Rob Baldwin

ships I have with my guests is very special. *(Angela Schneider)*

• Folks still want to be either warm or cool and are working from home, so there was quite a demand and we're keeping busy! *(Rob Baldwin)*

ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC FOR 2021 AND BEYOND?

• At this time I don't feel very optimistic. This pandemic just keeps going on and on. Perhaps when I see more vaccines being distributed I'll feel a little better. *(Michelle Gonzalez)*

• Absolutely! The best way to maintain gratitude and a positive outlook is to focus on it, rather than the negativity that certainly is out there. I am a firm believer that what one chooses to focus on expands, so I focus on the good. *(Scott Tuffnell)*

• I am optimistic that we will see some amazing things — new ways to address new problems. I'm excited about that! *(Jennifer Cote)*

• I'm praying for our small businesses with

storefronts to make it through and have a very successful year in 2021. I love Pinole. *(Debbie Ojeda)*

• I am optimistic; not for the near future, since COVID is out of control, but for the second half of 2021, when hopefully the vaccine will be widely available. *(Deborah Jordan)*

• I remain optimistic. I'm no stranger to change. Adaptation and flexibility are crucial. I've never been one to remain stuck worrying about things that are not in my control. *(Angela Schneider)*

• We're optimistic for this year and beyond with the vaccine right around the corner and, as with every new year, we're using what we've learned to better ourselves and our customers. *(Rob Baldwin)*



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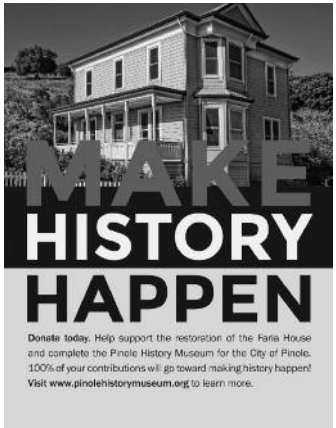
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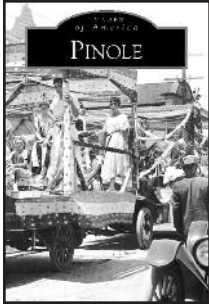


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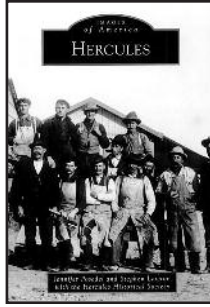
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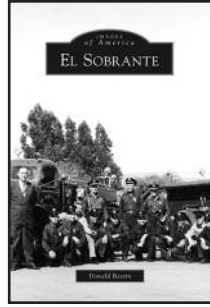
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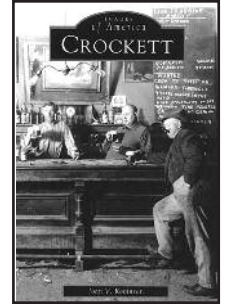
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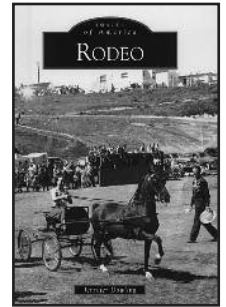
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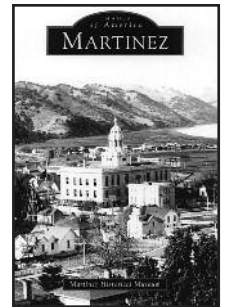
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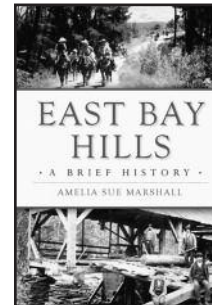
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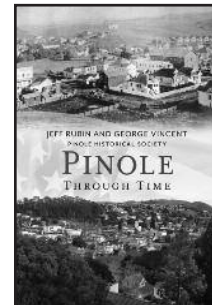
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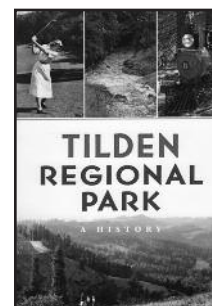
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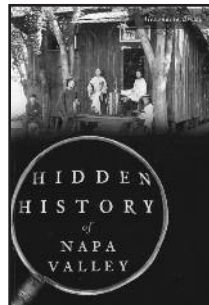
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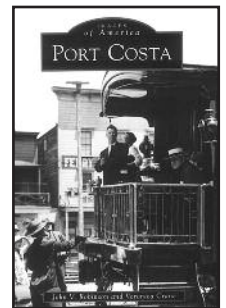
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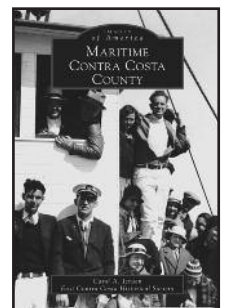
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