



El Cerrito Historical Society

P O Box 304, El Cerrito, CA 94530
elcerritohistoricalsociety@yahoo.com

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The Forge

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Save the Date ! The next meeting of the Historical Society will be a
POT LUCK PICNIC,
at Huber Park, on Terrace Drive, between Sea View and Leviston,
Sunday, October 11, 2009, from Noon to 2 PM
Bring a dish with enough to share.

In addition to up-dates on Society projects, we will learn a little about WILLIAM HUBER: early settler, attorney, land sub-divider, pioneer Stege Sanitary District Director, Mayor, and sometime rascal.

Last Meeting: We hosted a panel of the first generation descendants of the first Italian settlers in El Cerrito, who regaled us with stories of what it was like to live in this town 70 or 80 years ago. Our thanks to the panel members: Gino Martinucci, Theresa Parella, Fred Granzella and Ruby Fara Pozzan. Assistance was given by Emily Fara Akey and several members of the audience. According to comments received by Board members, this was one of our most successful programs. Should we invite other pioneer ethnic groups to give similar programs?

Future Meetings: Director David Weinstein has taken on the role of program chairman, and is planning for a talk by well-known architect Don Hardison on the history of modern architecture in El Cerrito for our January meeting. In April we hope to have a tour and history of Sunset View Cemetery, and in July, a tour and history of Camp Herms. If you have topics which you think will be of interest to our members, and will attract guests, please tell David! Call 524-1737 or e-mail, davidweinstein@yahoo.com.

Historic photos: Our Society's photo display, featuring the Japanese flower industry in our area, will open on October 2, 2009 at the Senior Center (behind the Library on Stockton Avenue) and run until November 20th.

Creeks: We'll look forward to a report from our committee working on identifying and naming local creeks.

City Hall Room: All the furniture is in the new Dorothy & Sundar Shadi Historical Room on the second floor of City Hall, and the Board has begun to meet there. The Board is now planning to remove our archives from the library to this room, under the direction of Vice President, Grace MacNeill. The City Attorney has not yet drafted an occupancy agreement, which is causing the delay.

Walking tour: David Weinstein is planning an inaugural historical walking tour with the Berkeley Path Wanderers as co-sponsor. This will be scheduled in the Spring, probably in the evening. We're looking forward to it!

1715 Elm Street: The historic Rodini home and gardens are now under-going city review, as a local developer wishes to construct 14 homes on that parcel. The Society has written a letter of interest in retaining the historic aspects. The developer has submitted a new proposal and the City has awarded a contract for the preparation of a mitigated negative declaration. Tom spoke at the City Council meeting about the contract award, but he feels that the item was incorrectly noticed in the Council agenda so his comments were not exactly on target.

Tradeway and former Chamber office: These buildings now belong to the City's Redevelopment Agency, and the property is being marketed for development. The Society initially assisted the City's expert in evaluating the historic aspects of these buildings, and later wrote to the City that the Society's evaluations were not adopted.

Mira Flores: This project of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency seeks to retain several of the historic structures from the Japanese nursery industry which flourished in the cities of El Cerrito and Richmond during most of the last century. We've been working with Richmond and the Rosie The Riveter National Park. The Society responded to the Miraflores draft EIR with a number of comments and corrections. In addition we noted that there were two additional structures that merited preservation beyond those listed in the Draft EIR.

Historic Resources: Eighteen months ago this Society offered to raise the money and work with a registered architectural historian to prepare a historic context statement for El Cerrito, but the City said No, it would do it. We felt the first step would be a meeting with the State Historic Preservation Office, but as of this writing, City staff has not yet met with SHPO. The City staff has told us that they have prepared an RFP for a historic resources survey, which they are ready to send out as soon as they get input from SHPO. The goal of the Society is to have a historic context statement prepared, have the City Council adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance, and then create a Register of Historic Resources in El Cerrito, so that we are not forced to react after a project is in the works; (see Rodini and Tradeway above, and the Cici building last year). We may have a special Society meeting on the historic buildings in El Cerrito.