

Oral Histories - We need help. Do we have anyone who knows how to conduct oral histories in the proper manner and who could teach some of our members how it is properly done? Thanks!

Creeks - Our creeks committee offered to meet with members of the city's Environmental Quality Commission to see where we might co-operate. No response yet.

- Chairman Larry Damon has had to step down to undergo some treatments.

One of our Directors, Kathy McKinley, is beginning to pick up the ball.

- We are still watchful of the creek on the Rodini property, 1715 Elm. A review of the proposed project was expected to be on the Design Review Board's agenda last month, but instead is still pending.

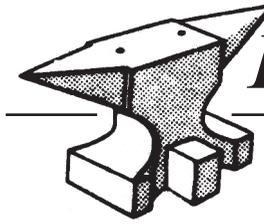
10848 San Pablo Avenue - The former quarry office building, then Japanese florist shop, and most recently home to the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce is a topic of serious interest to a host of residents. It is pretty much unanimous among them that although it is on a site slated for redevelopment, the building ought to be preserved. It is not only significant to our historic fabric but it is also the kind of interesting structure the new San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan says we need. Environmental studies prior to development for this site and the Tradeway site are about to begin.

Shadi Room - A cadre of dedicated volunteers has been meeting weekly to organize and arrange our archives in the Shadi History Room in City Hall, led by Society Secretary Joann Steck-Bayat. Contact Joann if you want to help. Meanwhile Joann, Kathy McKinley and Barbara Hill have been studying computers and software and are zeroing in on a solution for us. The Society appreciates all their efforts!

TEPCO Exhibit - Lynn and Sandi Genser-Maack have agreed to let us continue to display in the Shadi Room a beautiful portion of their collection of TEPCO china a bit longer. If you haven't seen it yet, make an appointment to come by and see it.

Sign - Our Directors are working to get a sign or banner to identify the Society at public events. The tricky part is enlarging the Forge logo, but progress is being made.

The Forge and Sparks from the Anvil. Our two publications have been handled this year by Joann Steck-Bayat and Tom Panas, with David Weinstein as a writer. We thank them.



El Cerrito Historical Society

P O Box 304, El Cerrito, CA 94530

elcerritohistoricalsociety@yahoo.com

www.elcerritowire.com/history

Vol. 26
No. 5

The Forge

November 2010

The Official Publication of the El Cerrito Historical Society, Copyright © 2010

OUR NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, JANUARY 23 1:30 PM AT THE SENIOR CENTER

Annual Meeting - Each year in January we meet to get a financial report, hear progress reports and set priorities, and to elect a Board of Directors. Our next annual meeting will be at the Senior Center on Sunday, January 23, 2011 at 1:30 PM.

Programs - Under the leadership of our Vice President David Weinstein, the Society had a wonderful array of programs in 2010. This included tours of the former quarry office, Camp Herms, Sunset View Cemetery, El Cerrito High School, and the city's Recycling Center. Each tour was preceded by a brief history of the site. Attendance was always good, from 50 up to 175 folks. Good stuff, David!

Events - The Society also participated in other community happenings including the 70th Anniversary of the El Cerrito Preschool Co-op and the annual city-wide Independence Day gathering. We have addressed the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency, the Arts & Culture Commission, and the Environmental Quality Commission. We displayed the Nursery photo exhibit at City Hall and participated in two related nursery events in Richmond.

The El Cerrito Historical Society is a volunteer, non-political, non-profit organization with one agenda: to locate and preserve our local history. Anyone may join; dues are \$20 (Household member), \$50 (Sponsoring member), and \$250 (Life member).

September meeting highlights El Cerrito High

When El Cerrito High School re-opened in 2009, the community got more than a school. It got a museum.

Not only does the new school, which replaced a 1941 Art Deco structure, contain what its founders believe may be the only museum in an active high school in the

country. It also has historic displays and artifacts from the old school throughout the campus in display cases, attached to walls, and otherwise displayed.

On September 25, 2010, the El Cerrito Historical Society in conjunction with the El Cerrito High School Archiving Project put on a tour of the building that attracted about 175 people, including graduates, former & current teachers and staff, and even a few current students who helped guide visitors to points of interest.

Of those there were plenty.

Mayor Janet Abelson pointed out one – the “Pep Jug” on display in the museum, which is just behind the main lobby. It was an essential part of team sports, inspiring fan enthusiasm. “When they pulled the plug out of the Pep Jug,” she remembers, “everybody had to scream.”

That’s a tradition long forgotten, student Lea Roberts said. “I never heard of it.”

Still, Lea, who was volunteering at the event, found it inspirational. “I think history class is kind of boring,” she said, “but I think it’s cool to know about your school.”

Visitors, either with guides or on their own, went from station to station to hear about the school’s legacy.

At the science department display, department chair Bob Fabini showed off a once-operational cyclotron: a device that accelerates atomic particles. It was manufactured by students in 1947. “As far as I know, it functioned,” he said. “I don’t know what they did with it.”

by Dave Weinstein

Cathy Berman, the longtime speech and debate teacher and coach, attracted a horde of fans who remembered her teams’ many triumphs. “For me, speech and debate is a love story, a personal love story,” she said. It’s how she met her husband, for one thing, and how she inspired several generations of students.

By the gym, longtime coach Larry Quirico showed off photos of the school’s many star athletes. A number of them went onto professional careers, including Ernie Broglio

of the St. Louis Cardinals. A Sports Illustrated cover shot of him is on display.

After the museum, the gym area is probably the best place to soak up school history. There are many photo displays, trophies, and a wonderful painted cutout in the gym of a



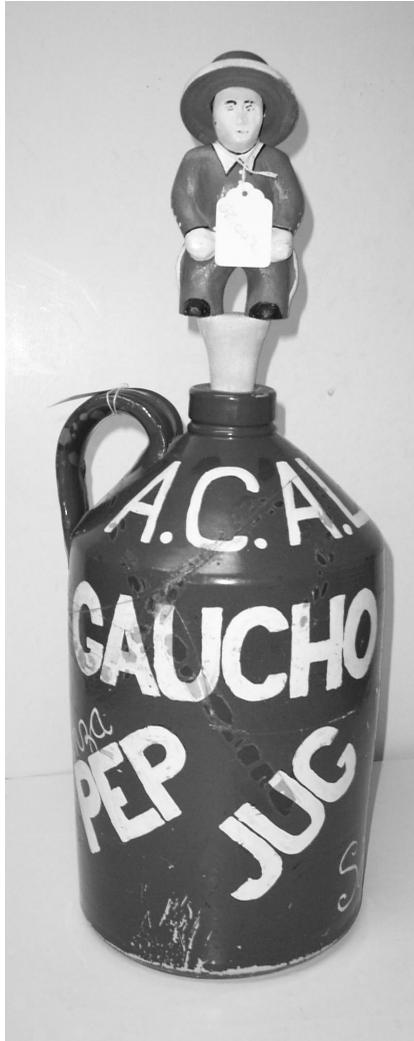
The Gaucho, the El Cerrito High School mascot. Photo by the author

Gaucha astride a bucking bronco.

Like several teachers who have given El Cerrito High much of its spirit, Quirico didn’t only teach here – he went to school here too.

“When I was a kid I always wanted to be a PE teacher and a coach,” he says, “and to make it better than that I came back here.”

To visit the school’s historical displays, ask permission at the main office. The school is at 540 Ashbury Avenue.



The Pep Jug. Photo courtesy of the El Cerrito High School Archiving Project