

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE EL CERRITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY - JANUARY 2017

1. The Historical Society will kick off the city's Centennial Year at its annual meeting on Wednesday, January 25 at the Community Center. After a short business meeting that starts at 7 PM, Society Vice President Dave Weinstein will talk about how El Cerrito moved from a "City of Sin" to a "City of Homes." While focusing on the gambling, dining, dancing, live music (some by musicians who later became famous) and prostitution that once made El Cerrito - as well as several other places in Contra Costa County - popular places to visit, Dave will also review the changes that ensued as reformers and a few lawmakers stepped in to close up the gambling joints.

Dave will also talk about the first major industry in town to attract out-of-towners. Hint: it had something to do with death. We'll also learn about why one city just to our south looked to El Cerrito to provide some of the services people in that town wanted - only they didn't want them to be in their town. Have you ever thought the borders of our city are a bit unusual, with some of the homes and businesses on San Pablo Avenue being in El Cerrito and some being in Richmond? Dave will explain how the answer goes back to when El Cerrito was created 1917.

2. Throughout 2017 the El Cerrito Historical Society will host and take part in many programs and festivities as part of the overall city Centennial celebration. Check our website for more the details.

3. The City recently honored two El Cerrito centenarians, Theresa Parella and Frank Storno. Theresa still lives in the house on Richmond Street where she was born. She attended Fairmont School, later taught there, and even after retirement was a regular volunteer there until a couple of years ago. Theresa is a life member of our Society. Frank was born in El Cerrito on Elm Street and just turned 100. Both of these two remarkable individuals were born here before El Cerrito was founded.

4. If you are not already a member of the Historical Society, you can become a household member for just \$25. You can also choose to be a sustaining member for \$60 or a Life Member for \$300.

5. At our annual meeting the members get the final say on the dues. The Board will recommend that the dues stay the same as in the past few years: \$25/\$60/\$300. At our annual meeting we also elect our officers and Directors for 2017. There are open seats on the Board of Directors and the Society welcomes prospective new Board members. Some current Board members will serve another year if re-elected, but if you would like to be on the Board, contact President Rich Bartke 235-1315.