

Sparks July 2022

The city celebrates the 50th anniversary of its Recycling Center. On August 5, 50 years to the day when El Cerrito's then-volunteer run recycling center first accepted donations of cans and bottles, our beloved center will be celebrated with historical discussions, art, music performed on instruments made of recycled materials, a brief tour, and refreshments.



Joel Witherell had oversight of the city's recycling center from 1973 to 1993, a period in which it grew, expanded, contracted when necessary, and established a stable funding mechanism. His contribution will be honored at the August 5 anniversary. Photo by Mark DuFrene, West County Times, 1992, courtesy of the El Cerrito Historical Society

On Friday, August 5, at 5:30, we hope to see you at the event, sponsored by our society and the city of El Cerrito's Environmental Quality Committee.

Speakers will include two of the founders, Gregg Cook and Ken Little; the man who built the original glass crusher in 1972, Allan Gardiner, former center manager, Becky Dowdakin, and longtime operations manager Mario Gonzalez.

Evelyn Mitchell, the city's poet laureate and a member of the EQC, will perform a poem dedicated to the center.

[Steve Zwetsch](#), the center's artist in residence, will perform on handmade instruments. Zwetsch and former recycling center resident artists Kloe Chan and Risa Dye will host hands-on art making for all ages.

Throughout the event city staff will be present to explain how best to recycle, what materials are accepted, etc.

There will be free refreshments.



The Historical Society has sponsored or co-sponsored several historical celebrations at the recycling center, including this event in 1992. Photo by Dave Weinstein

Recycling Center Anniversary. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, August 5. El Cerrito Recycling Center, 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito. Free. The program runs 5:30 to 6:30, with hands-on art making and a tour 6:30-7:30.

Remembering a master of voices. For a little town, El Cerrito has played a large role in a little known field of entertainment and commerce: voice over.

Joe Paulino, a member of the historical society who grew up on Everett Street (Joe says Dixieland trumpet great Bob Scobey had lived in the house before), has retired from a career in the field, as a DJ on KGO radio and voicing more commercials than he can recall, including about 2,000 for McDonald's.

But it wasn't to speak about [his own career](#) that Joe contacted the society. It was to donate archival materials, including a wonderful photo album from Fairmount Elementary School from the early 1964-1965. As Joe observed, "It has over 70 black & white stills that really capture the time."

He also wanted to tell us about another El Cerritan, Rick Cimino (1929-1991), "a great voice over" actor, whose "demo tape was the model for all of us."



Rick Cimino's demo tape has been posted on YouTube by friend and colleague Joe Paulino. It is well worth a listen.

Joe posted [Cimino's demo tape](#) on YouTube, and wrote an introduction to Cimino:

“In the late 60's and early 70's, Rick Cimino was an extremely popular SF-based Disc Jockey who worked at a number of stations including KEWB, KNEW & KSFO. At one point in time he had bragging rights for being the Number One SF DJ in his time slot.

“From the mid-70's through his sudden passing at age 62, Rick was extremely active as an announcer for countless commercials, promos and in-house narrations. He was also quite busy as a versatile voice actor with work for Sesame Street, Hanna-Barbera and the Star Wars franchise, as well as a number of dramatic radio plays.”

Newest utility box mural celebrates our city's diversity. El Cerrito artist Kristen Kong recently completed a mural on a utility box at the corner of Colusa Avenue and Fairmount Avenue, across from Sunset View Cemetery.



Kristen Kong's utility box mural can be enjoyed at Colusa and Fairmount avenues, ideally with coffee and a pastry from nearby Fatapple's. Courtesy of Kristen Kong

She worked with the historical society to identify well known people from diverse ethnic backgrounds who had lived in El Cerrito. Among others shown are baseball legend Pumpsie Green, and Victor Castro.

Help us document and preserve the city's history by becoming a member of the El Cerrito Historical Society. Membership, a bargain at \$30 a year, is open to everyone and includes this newsletter, our email updates and meeting notices. More importantly, it assists our mission to locate, preserve and educate people about local history. A membership form is online under "How you can help" at www.elcerritohistoricalsociety.org.

We also offer memberships at the sponsor level for \$75 and life memberships for \$400. We accept donations of any amount.

The El Cerrito Historical Society produces two publications, the Forge, which is a print publication, which we aim to produce four times a year, and Sparks (from the Anvil), an email publication which we aim to produce monthly. Both hark back to one of El Cerrito's original settlers, William Rust, a blacksmith who worked at his anvil producing, among other things, sparks.

