

Sparks October 2023



“Tepco Beach” is what people call a section of Point Isabel where shards of old Tepco ware, which was manufactured in El Cerrito, can be admired during low and moderate tides. The factory dumped the shards here; Tepco ware underlies other areas of Point Isabel’s fill. Photo by Dave Weinstein

Attend our Point Isabel History Walk. For thousands of years a low hill and natural shoreline, Point Isabel has been home to the Ohlone, a dock for Victor Castro’s rancho, a commercial ferry stop, a site for illegal prizefighting, a dynamite factory, frog farm, dump for toxic trash, and more. Tour leader Mary Barnsdale, a leader of Point Isabel Dog Owners, is writing a history of the Point, which is best known today as an off-leash area for dogs to play.

The walk is **11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, October 21, 2023.** Meet by the Sit and Stay Cafe, at the end of Central Avenue/Isabel Street, the bayside parking lot of Point Isabel Regional Shoreline. Free.

Please enter the society’s historical photo contest. Do you have photos of life in El Cerrito from before 1973? Share them with our community! Share your old photos of people, events, local landmarks, and El Cerrito businesses through the years.

Photos can be either high-res digital or prints. They must have been taken in El Cerrito and before 1973. Prizes will be awarded and all entries will be added to the ECHS collection and credited to the applicant. Hard copies of photos can be returned to the owner after the society makes scans for its archive.

The contest opens Monday, Sept. 25 and ends Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2023. Go to [the entry form on the society’s website](#) to take part.

Images from everyday life, children’s parties, family barbecues, events at the park, images of people who have contributed to the community, pictures of shopkeepers inside their stores, church events, all are of historic importance and will be treasured by the society!

Learn about El Cerrito’s shady past by joining When Gamblers Ran Our Town: A Tour.

Join Dave Weinstein to learn about El Cerrito's past when gambling and nightlife thrived. From the teens into the 1940's El Cerrito was a center for gambling, dog racing, dancing and entertainment, drinking, and vice. The walk starts near the former Wagon Wheel club, then passes the sites of other nightclubs and gambling halls including Rancho, Hollywood Club, and the It Club. **Sunday, November 12, 2023. 10 a.m.-Noon. Free.** Meet by the Bayview Eagles Hall (the former Wagon Wheel), 3223 Carlson Boulevard near Central Avenue.



The Molino Ciapusci Family is seen gathering in The Club Kona mid 1940's, back when El Cerrito knew how to have fun. El Cerrito Historical Society

Watch for the next Forge, our historical journal. Editor Jon Bashor is finalizing the third issue of the Forge for 2023, and we hope it hits your mailbox this month. We send it to all members. Not a member? Join the society – or pick up a freebie Forge at City Hall, the community center, the El Cerrito Library.

Among our topics: the portrait of a remarkable woman of 96, Helen Hamilton Holloway, who was among the first African Americans to attend El Cerrito High, way back in 1946. We will also learn about the genesis – and a bit about the future – of the El Cerrito High School Archiving Project, and about its remarkable museum within our high school.

Visit Alvarado Park in Richmond for a historic tour with El Cerrito Trail Trekkers. Step back in time as Trekkers explores the historic area once known as Grand Canyon Park, and visit the Belgium Sanitarium site in a hike titled **Footsteps to the Past: Alvarado Park and Beyond.**

Here, where the Wildcat Canyon meets the plain, Ohlone people thrived. Today, the park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to extensive New Deal-era stonework and unique design.

Retired East Bay Regional Parks supervising naturalist and manager Dave Zuckermann will be your guide on this 3-mile hike with a few short, steep sections.

Sunday, November 5, 2023 10 a.m. to noon. Meet at the lower end of the Alvarado Staging Area in Wildcat Canyon Regional Park (off of Park Ave. in Richmond). Free.

The historical society thanks the goodhearted people who have donated historical items for our archive. Jim Almeida has donated valuable historical material, including many hundreds of photos, related to St. Jerome Catholic Church and St. Jerome School, which he attended and which recently held a well attended reunion.

Harding Elementary School donated three marvelous scrapbooks of the school's PTA, dating from 1934-1935, 1935-1936, and 1943-1944. They were found in the school library. Did you know that in 1943 the students and parents at Harding raised about \$1,000 to buy a jeep for the Army?

Joann Steck-Bayat of the El Cerrito High School Archiving Project donated a DVD of the film, 'Green and White: The Gaucho Story,' a 2007 documentary by Kent Sanctuary.



Scroll through the society's Instagram site to be amazed by people, places and events from our recent and not-so-recent past. El Cerrito Historical Society

Check out the society's Instagram page. Recent posts by Nick Brooks include a marvelous view of the It Club (which we will stroll by on our upcoming gambling tour.) Ah memories! The It Club was still in business into the early 1980s. One Instagram commenter recalled a bartender at the It named Danny "who answered the phone with his deep, deep voice," "THIS IS IT". The It club sponsored our softball team for a while and my brother stripped with some professional male strippers on a ladies night show as partial payback."

You can find the society's Instagram content on your phone at @echitoricalsociety or you can preview the page on another device here; <https://www.instagram.com/echitoricalsociety>.

The Historical Society Board meets the second Thursday of the month at 5 p.m., these days via Zoom. Members are encouraged to attend. Meetings rarely take more than an hour. Occasionally we need to change the date of a meeting. Our next meeting is **November 9, 2023 at 5 p.m.** (The 4:45 start time provides a cushion in case of glitches.) Topics will include: Preservation of historic places, archiving, publications, fundraising, our annual meeting, membership drive and more.

El Cerrito Historical Society is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: El Cerrito Historical Society's Zoom Meeting

Time: Nov 9, 2023 04:45 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85356669936?pwd=VFMyZE4vU1doditlSW4rK2l4S2NNZz09>

Meeting ID: 853 5666 9936

Passcode: 569670

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