

Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



Fall 2009

P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org



Boy Scouts from Pinole Troop 86 retire a flag at the 2008 event.

Part of Pinole History Week

VETERANS' DAY MEMORIAL AND FLAG RETIREMENT NOV. 11

The Pinole Historical Society will sponsor the first Pinole History Week November 9-13, a week-long celebration of the city's history that will include historical presentations in all Pinole elementary schools, the second annual Veterans' Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony, tours of the Downer Mansion, and special programming on Pinole Community TV.

Continued on page 5

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All the ads in this issue of *Newsbriefs* are a mixed blessing—crowding our news items, but paying the freight for our busy society communiqué.

Now self-supporting thanks to the generosity of our advertisers, the *Newsbriefs'* quarterly, free circulation now reaches more than 2,000 people with our print edition, and countless more via our website.

All this is the result of solid community interest and local business support, for which the PHS is very grateful. They help us bring history to you.

Enjoy our PHS news items, and also notice our business sponsors' ads. They've put THEIR money where OUR mouth is. Please thank them with YOUR patronage.

Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

WHERE TO FIND NEWSBRIEFS 99

You can find the Pinole Historical Society *Newsbriefs* at these locations:

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It's also posted on the PHS website.

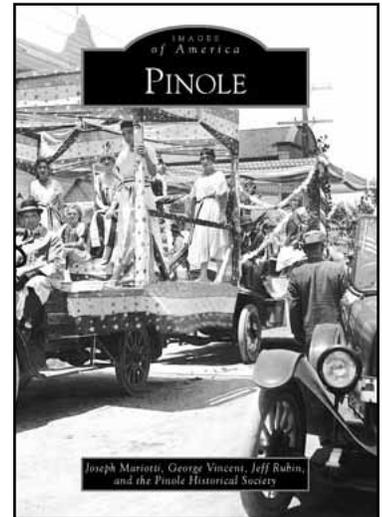
FOR ADVERTISERS: *PHS Newsbriefs* prints 2,000 copies every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database. If you're interested in advertising in the newsletter, please contact Jeff Rubin at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org or call 724-9507.

IMAGES OF AMERICA: PINOLE A GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT

Arcadia Publishing is in its second printing of *Images of America: Pinole*, and the Pinole Historical Society recently received a new shipment of books.

Response to the initial printing of the book has exceeded expectations, and the PHS thanks everyone for their kind words and attendance at the four book signings between August and October.

We'd like to remind you that books make great holiday gifts, and that if you are interested in sharing a piece of Pinole's history with friends and family, we have *Images of America: Pinole* for sale every Saturday at the Pinole Farmers' Market. It's also available from our website: www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.



UPCOMING PHS MEETINGS

The Pinole Historical Society has begun a series of presentations and activities at its monthly meetings.

Please join us on the third Thursday every month at 6:30 p.m. in the Alex Clark Room of the Public Safety Facility. We'll be having presentations, guest speakers, discussions and other activities. There will be something interesting for attendees at every meeting.

All PHS members and the general public are invited to attend our meetings.

2009

November 19

December 17

2010

January 21

February 18

March 18



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President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

FALL IS THE BEST SEASON OF ALL

Red, yellow, golden, crimson colors everywhere! Leaves are dropping gracefully, and squirrels and blue jays are collecting acorns as fast as they hit the ground.

Nature has announced the arrival of fall. For me, fall is the best time of the year. The colors of autumn; the aromas of baking—cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice filling the air; apples, pears, and nuts; wild turkeys spreading their tail feathers; and all the special holidays to come.

Oktoberfest is one of my favorites because of the festivals; then there's all the arts and crafts, the dried corn stalks, pumpkins, and red juicy apples just waiting for children to go dunking for them at Halloween.

Then we have that wonderful day of Thanksgiving that we all so very much look forward to. We go to grandma's house, where there's all that good, yummy food.

And we certainly can-

not forget the celebration of all our various religious holidays.

I encourage all of you this year to just take a quiet moment to remember and reflect on all those who have come before us who have laid the way for us to be here, to embrace those we know, friends and family, those who are in hard times, and share our blessings with them at this time. And, remember those men and women who are still giving their lives and working valiantly to protect us.

Fall holidays are also a great time to visit with relatives. These visits provide great opportunities to talk to our elders and interview them about family history, and document their stories and the events in their lives.

Clarify old family traditions, old recipes and culture, and videotape the interviews when possible.

Above all, take all those boxes of loose

pictures and photo albums that you have inherited from a family member. You know, the ones where you have no clue who is in the picture.

Identify the people and write down the full names, ages, where taken, and what year.

I have boxes of pictures and tintypes dating back to the 1800s; I have absolutely no idea who these people are, and there's no one around to tell me.

The Pinole Historical Society has some special events coming up in November — most notably Pinole History Week (November 9-13) and the second annual Veterans' Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony (November 11). Please come and join us.

Sales of our book, *Images of America: Pinole*, have gone beyond our greatest expectations. Never did I imagine that the public would embrace it so generously and would



Marcia Kalapus

grant so much support toward its production.

I reassure all of you that the project of writing that book was a labor of love by everyone who was involved, from its original conception to the very end when it came off the press, as well as those involved promoting and selling it.

All of us at the Pinole Historical Society thank all of you for buying the book, and for coming to our book signings and joining in the celebrations.

We are planning our 2010 activities and events. We hope that you will join the society when we start our membership drive for 2010 so you don't miss anything.

Have the best of holidays.

Geoff Torretta

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PINOLE'S 'GOLDEN' OPPORTUNITY

By George Vincent
PHS Vice President

Pinole's planners should look forward to the past when deciding on face-lifting architecture to beautify the "Old Town."

This can be done while still keeping with the historical flavor of the area.

Currently, the downtown is pockmarked with large empty spaces on the corners of Tennent and San Pablo and Pear and Tennent. Why not consider a revival of the features of a lost town landmark in designing a new building?

From the late 19th century until 1958, the Golden West Hotel and Town Tavern was the signature building on the southwest corner of San Pablo and Tennent avenues. Its stylish curvature of design dominated



The building that housed Golden West Hotel (top floor), and the several restaurants and taverns that occupied the bottom floor, was an architectural landmark in Pinole for more than 60 years.

the busy intersection known as the "Four Corners" and anchored Pinole's first downtown post office.

The '50's frenzy of suburban development resulted in the razing of the old order downtown. The Golden West Hotel was a casualty of this "forward thinking"; this and other buildings were demolished because they were dated.

Historical preservation is never out of date. It is a never-ending process of creative thinking of how to mix new and old with imagination.

Pinole's unique charac-

ter was born in the old downtown amid the townsfolk and their buildings, such as the Golden West Hotel.

Pinole stands at the crossroads of opportunity to create an historic district in the geographic confines of the old downtown and its surroundings.

Reviving the look of the Golden West Hotel in a modern building design would be a good start.

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VETERANS' DAY MEMORIAL AND FLAG RETIREMENT

Continued from front page

The signature event of Pinole History Week will be the second annual *Veterans' Day Memorial and Flag Retirement Ceremony*, co-sponsored by the PHS and the City of Pinole, on Wednesday, November 11, 2009, at 11 a.m. at the barbecue area in Fernandez Park.

An estimated 500 people attended last year's event that included Boy Scout Troop 86, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2798, St. Joseph School, and the Pinole Valley High School Marching Band.

This year the Pinole Fire Department and the Boy Scouts will handle the flag retirement duties. St. Joseph School, the Pinole Valley High School Marching Band, the Pinole Police Explorers color guard, Girl Scouts and Brownies, and professional singer Ginger Hohm (Star Spangled Banner), will be featured.

If you would like to donate a flag (a tax-deductible \$25 donation to the PHS is requested), e-mail the PHS at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org. Put **Flag Retirement** in the subject line. People retiring flags will receive a new, high-quality nylon, all-weather, embroidered 3 x 5-foot flag.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Longtime Pinole teacher and PHS co-founder and vice president George Vincent has written an engaging program for fourth-grade students studying California history that will be presented at Ellerhorst, Shannon, Collins, Stewart, and St. Joseph

schools. This is part of the Pinole Historical Society's commitment to bring our city's history into the schools.

There will also be a program, still in development, at the Pinole Library.



There will be two other events on Wednesday, November 11:

- The Pinole Senior Center will host a special Veterans' Day lunch at noon, following the flag retirement ceremony. Tickets are \$5. The Pinole Historical Society has 50 tickets to sell. If you would like to have lunch after the event, please e-mail the PHS at info@pinolehistoricalsociety.org. Put **Veterans' Day Lunch** in the subject line. We will arrange to get a ticket to you. We'll also have lunch tickets for sale at the PHS booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market every Saturday through November 7.

- Tours of the Downer Mansion will begin at 2 p.m., conducted by Linda Bartels, who owns the home with her husband, Don. Tours will be held on the half hour through 4 p.m., for a total of five tours. **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.**

There is a signup sheet at the PHS booth at the Pinole Farmers' Market. You may also sign up by e-mailing info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org. Put **Downer Tour** in the subject line. Let us know your name and what time you prefer. Tours are limited to 10 people.



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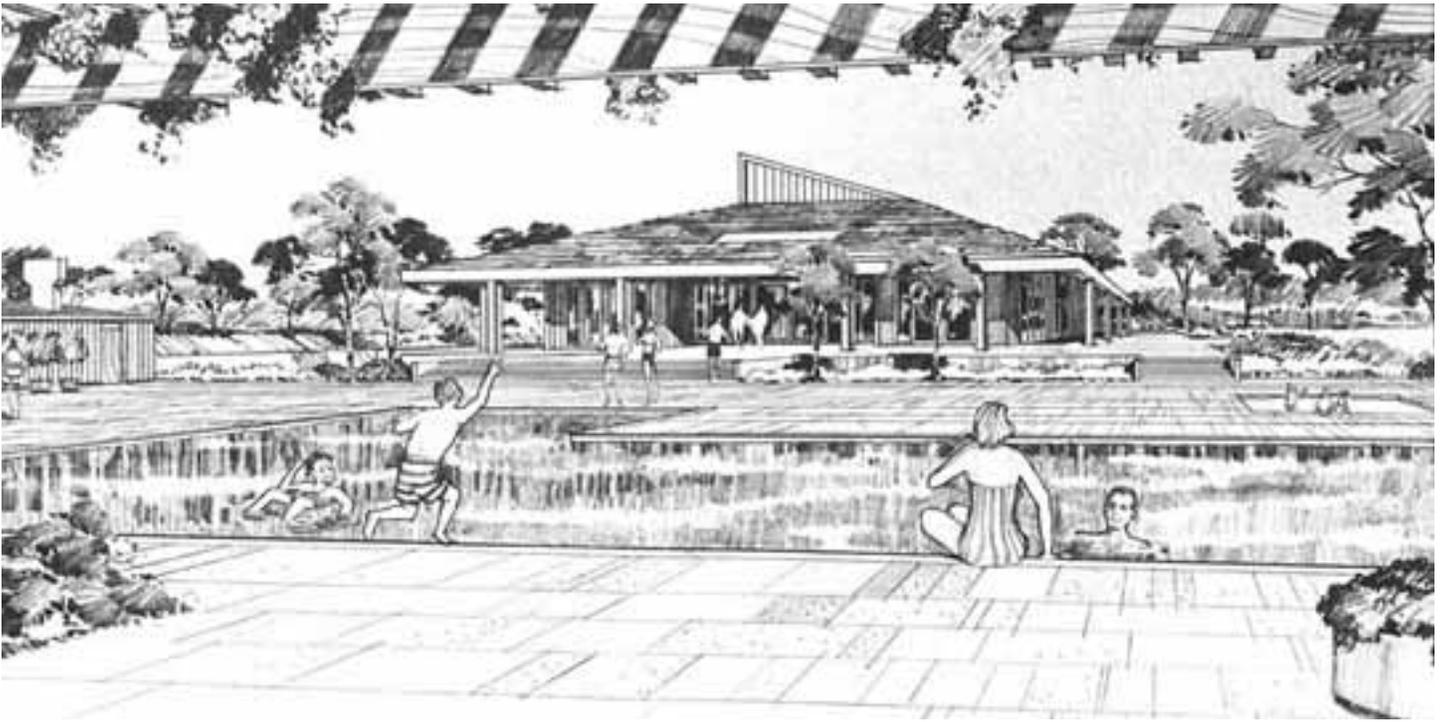
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Silvercreek Swim Center artist's rendering from the 1958 Silvercreek subdivision sales brochure.

Back in the day

PINOLE SWIM CENTER HELPED SELL THE VALLEY

The Pinole housing boom between 1958 and 1968 netted a high school and more than 2,550 new homes, most constructed on old ranches in Pinole Valley.

The first phase of the Silvercreek subdivision, developed on the old Simas ranch, was the only one of these devel-

opments to include a swim club. The Silvercreek Swim Center and Clubhouse opened in 1968 and was built to accommodate a recreational swim team, recreational swimming, diving, and a baby pool.

Initially the club was membership-based for households in the Silver developments; later,

membership was opened to the entire community.

In the mid 1970s the swim center was sold to the YMCA. The clubhouse became a preschool, which today houses the Pinole Tiny Tots program. In 1976, the YMCA constructed a new 2 1/2-foot-deep teaching pool to accommodate its swim-lesson program.

When the YMCA's new facility in Richmond was being planned in the late 1980s, it was interested in finding a buyer for the Pinole facility. Lee Perrins, a Pinole resident and swim-team parent, was instrumental in urging the City of Pinole to purchase the pool.

In the mid 1990s, the

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PINOLE SWIM CENTER

Continued from page 6
 city assembled a large citizens' group to address community-center needs for its residents, and the Pinole City Council approved a remodeling project at the swim center. After a year of construction, the remodeled swim center reopened in the spring of 2000.

With the 1968 opening of the Silvercreek Swim Center came the first year of the Silvercreek Seals Swim Team. Fred Brown, a resident and teacher at Pinole Valley High School, coached the team.

The Silvercreek Seals, later known as the YMCA Seals and then the Pinole Seals, became a strong team with notable coaches and swimmers, many of them former Seals.

In 1987, under the leadership of Coach Ronnie Heidary, Pinole won the first of seven

consecutive county championships.

Former Seal swimmer and coach Matt Ehrenberger recalls: "Growing up at Silvercreek was not a scheduled activity as many kids have today; it was just a way of life. That is what you did; you hung out at the pool."

Longtime swimmers recall swim practice first thing in the morning, followed by assisting the younger kids with their practice; after lunch it was time for free swim, then back to the pool in the evening for the synchronized swimming program.

The Seals continue to feed both swimming and water polo programs at Pinole Valley High School, as well as colleges. Most of the All-American high school swimmers had their starts at the swim center; these include nine swim-

mers (Steve Haufler, Jim Ulversoy, Ron and Don Heidary, Kim and Kelly Jesfield, Dave Brown, Lindsey Etter, Tom Cuadros, and Nicole Ripsom) and 18 water polo players (Ron and Don Heidary, Angie Emerick, Bill Boyle, Don Kenny, Cindy Rote, Aaron Springer, Danielle Hurley, Michael Koehne, Joe Cleberg, Ryan Arrington, Don Kenny, Eric Johnson, Steve Chan, Julie White, Kelly Johnson, Shelly Dykstra, and Zack Roberts).

Swim-center programs include the Seals from 5:45 a.m. until late morning, followed by community lap swimming, recreational swimming, and swimming lessons. Water aerobics, birthday parties and Special Olympics also take place at the center.

The cost of operating any community swimming pool rarely breaks even. Budget cuts in 2009 resulted in a shortened swim season and could result in future closure.

In August, many community members committed to raising funds to keep the facility open in future years. Plans for the Pinole Seals-sponsored

silent auction, scheduled for November 7; a holiday season See's candy sale; and a community fun run planned for April 17, 2010, are under way, with the goal of raising funds to keep the swim center open.

— *By Maureen Meehan Toms, with contributions from Matt Ehrenberger, Jim Ulversoy, Dave Brown, and Tom Cutino.*

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WANT TO BE PART OF PINOLE'S HISTORY?

There's a continuous parade of history in our city — and this is your opportunity to get in on the action!

The Pinole Historical Society's ability and credibility were resoundingly bolstered by the publication of *Images of America: Pinole*. Sales since its July 27 debut — a mere 12 weeks ago — have driven Arcadia Publishing Co. into its second printing.

The Pinole Historical Society has given numerous programs to service and civic groups over the last half year. Beginning with Pinole History Week (November 9-13), we'll be conducting history programs in the city's elementary schools. In June, we conducted a very successful Flag Day Essay Contest in our schools, the results of which may be found at www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.

We promote the city's history every week at the Pinole Farmers' Market and during the summer at the Summer Sounds in the Park concert series.

All this takes people power and money.

Annual membership dues for the Pinole Historical Society are modest, and remain unchanged for 2010, aided by the strong business ad campaign and support for our quarterly *PHS Newsbriefs*. Individual memberships are only \$30, Business memberships



Downtown Pinole, looking east.

\$50, and Lifetime memberships \$150.

With a growing membership, 40 newsletter advertisers, and more than 630 books sold, you might ask, "Where's the money going?"

Well, much of it is going into our museum fund. A professional assessment provided by the City of Pinole's consultant found a Pinole museum to require between \$25,000 and \$35,000 annually to operate — after outfitting the Faria House with exhibits, displays,

etc. We hope this will happen in about three years.

(Museum consultant Kathleen Brown will make a presentation to the Pinole City Council on November 17, detailing everything that's needed to establish a municipal museum.)

Grants are out there for us after we demonstrate a solid financial foundation and community backing.

Join us, put in some time and money (donations are always welcome), come to our meetings and events, and you, too, can make your mark in the city's history.

Membership renewals for 2010 have begun. You will find your application on the back page of this newsletter. Please join us.

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It happened back then

SLOP CREW UNCOVERS THE CARLOTTA

The Ship Lifters of Pinole (SLOP), an ad hoc committee of the Pinole Historical Society, have succeeded in their endeavor to exhume the remains of a ship out of the tideland mud of San Pablo Bay. The ship, named Carlotta by Bernardo Fernandez, its previous owner, is a 52-foot, two-masted, flat-bottomed schooner previously used to haul farm products about the bay and river delta. It is estimated to have sunk approximately in 1905 and gradually became deteriorated and covered by the water and mud of San Pablo Bay.

On May 16, 1976, a stubborn crew of approximately 150, cheered on by an estimated 1,300 shoreside spectators, manually uncovered the hull, buried beneath 3-4 feet of mud.

— Pinole Historical Society newsletter, October 1976

The Carlotta en route to Antlers Tavern, where it was on display until moving to the Fernandez Mansion, where it remains on Dr. Joe Mariotti's front lawn.



FLAGS AVAILABLE FROM HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Do you have a made-in-America United States flag?

The Pinole Historical Society has a limited stock of American flags to fly on important occasions — such as Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, and New Year's Day.

The PHS has 3x5 nylon American flags — 50 stars, all-weather, embroidered — available for a donation of \$25 to the society.

And, we have a limited supply of basic flagpole kits (pole, bracket, etc.) at our quantity cost of just \$6. So, a flag and flagpole can be yours for a donation of only \$31 (plus postage if we mail them)!

Pick up your flag/pole at our Pinole Farmers' Market booth, or e-mail us at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.com and we'll make arrangements to get these items to you via U.S. mail. We accept checks and cash.



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YOU'VE GOT A QUESTION? WE'VE GOT AN ANSWER

Pinole has a long and interesting history. Is there something you'd like to know about the city or its people?

Send the Pinole Historical Society a question and we'll not only answer it, but we'll print it in the next issue of *Newsbriefs* so everyone will be informed.

And, if we don't know, we'll find out.

For example, perhaps you ran across a photo at a garage sale and want to have the people or buildings in it identified. Or, maybe you're wondering why the cross streets off Tennent Avenue are named after fruits. Let the PHS help you.

Send your photos and questions to us at info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org.



Check the Pinole Historical Society website for information on PHS activities and events – and, of course, the history of the sweetest city in the East Bay.
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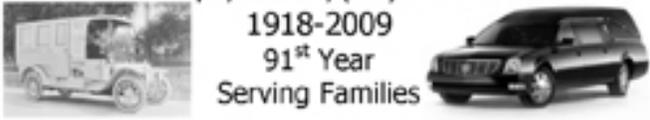
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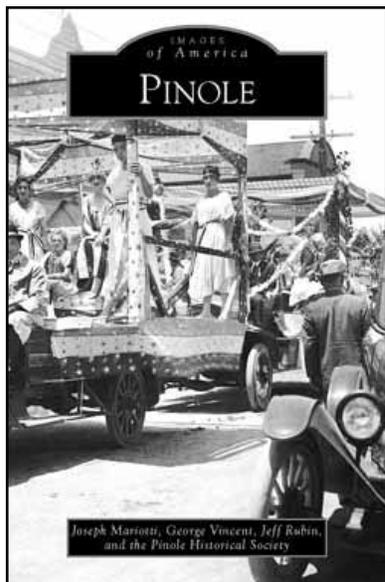
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