

# Pinole Historical Society Newsbriefs



P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564

[www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)    [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)

## PHS, PINOLE LIBRARY PRESERVE CITY'S HISTORY

**T**he Pinole Historical Society and the Pinole Library are united in their efforts to preserve the city's history—and present it to the public.

For the last year and a half, the library has offered the PHS the use of two large display cases, in which the society rotates historical exhibits.

The current exhibits celebrate National Preservation Month (May) and Pinole winners of National Women's History Month (March) awards.

The next exhibit, in June, will feature winners of our annual essay contest in Pinole schools.

For a historical society without a museum, the library's generosity gives us an opportunity to present the city's history to the public.

Recently, librarians Ian Richards and Tim

Madigan asked the PHS to provide photos for the library's previously bare brick walls. We were happy to oblige; now, 23 photos of Pinole's past

are hanging on the library's walls.

Included among these are several school class photos between 1889 and the 1930s, which

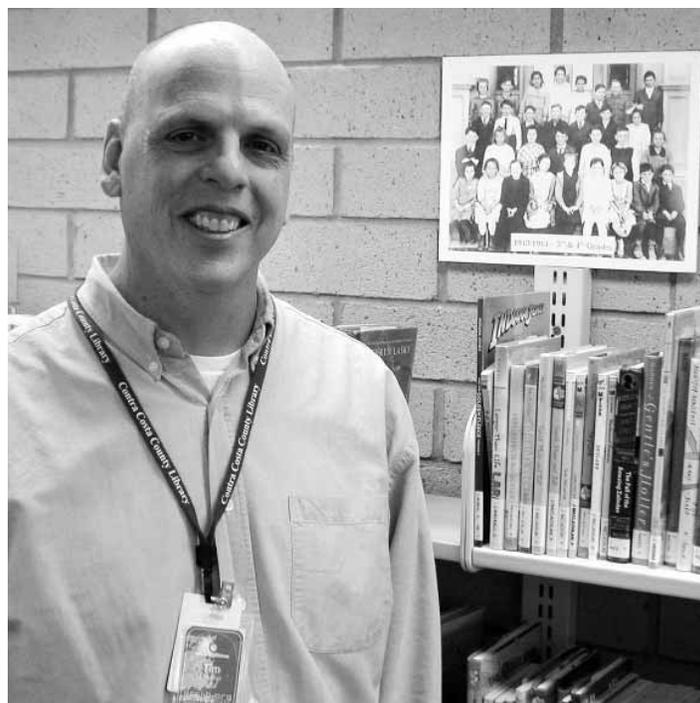
may be found in the children's section.

Tim and Ian have worked with the PHS to provide more on-line resources for our popular genealogy program—*How to Create a Family Tree*.

The library is a great place for people to do research on family histories (see page 14). And, there's no fee to use the library's computers.

The genealogy program, featuring PHS experts Marcia Kalapus and Shirley Ramos, will be offered Wednesday, May 11, at 2 p.m. at the Pinole Senior Center. The program is free, and no reservations are necessary. Either Ian or Tim will join us to review the library's resources.

We're also working with the library to present a history program for children this summer. We'll announce the details soon.



**Librarian Tim Madigan in the children's section, near a 1913-1914 Pinole-Hercules School class photo.**

Published quarterly by the Pinole Historical Society

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It's also posted on the PHS website.

**FOR ADVERTISERS:** More than 2,500 printed copies of *PHS Newsbriefs* are distributed every quarter, generating readership among thousands of Pinole residents. Hundreds more receive the newsletter directly from the PHS via its database and website. If you're interested in advertising, please contact Jeff Rubin at [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org) or call him at (510) 724-9507.

# PHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MEETINGS

**May 19: Quarterly membership meeting and PHS Annual Meeting.** Alex Clark Room, Pinole Public Safety Facility, 880 Tennent Avenue, 6:30 to 8 p.m. **Program:** *Images of America: Hercules*. Join author Jennifer Posedel as she talks about her soon-to-be-published Arcadia book about the history of our neighboring city. Jennifer will share interesting stories from Hercules's past and photos from long ago.

## ONGOING

**Pinole Library history exhibits.** Two exhibits at the library, 2935 Pinole Valley Road. Library hours: Monday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), Wednesday (2 to 8 p.m.), Friday and Saturday (12 to 5 p.m.).

**PHS booth at Pinole Farmers' Market.** Every other Saturday through December.

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# President's Message

Marcia Kalapus, President, Pinole Historical Society

## LOOKING FOR YOUNG HISTORY SCIENTISTS

**O**ne good result of all the rain so far this year is that the ground got saturated for spring gardeners to begin turning their soil and preparing for the first planting, which historically has been on Good Friday.

The negative side is that some lawns have slid away and some hillsides have slid into homes. Mother Nature is as fickle as she can be sometimes. Very unpredictable.

My thoughts lately have been on what kinds of subjects we can entice our young people to select for their reading requirements this summer at the local libraries.

I'm choosing science/biology (growing food) topics for grades K-8 grades, and I am challenging these budding scientists to read about fruits and vegetables that they see at the local farmers' markets, and find out what countries they originated

from, and when they were brought to California for the first time. The Pinole Library has all kinds of books on how to grow food.

In early Pinole, the Martinez adobe and ranch (1825-1860) was located in Pinole Valley. The Martinez family grew pear trees that they brought with them when they located to their new home. Many of the streets in old Pinole—Peach Street, Pear Street, Prune Street, and Plum Street—are named after fruit trees that were brought here by settlers and planted on their farms and ranches.

I would like for my scientific team to search California history to see if they can find out when some citrus fruit trees (oranges, lemons, and grapefruit), were first planted and where. Apples, table grapes, mandarin oranges, tomatoes, spinach, corn, squash, and peaches; there are so many.



**Marcia Kalapus**

Were they bare root trees or from seeds? Did the settlers bring them on their wagon trains or on a ship? In Southern California, in the Palm Springs desert, there are

a lot of palm trees that produce the dates.

None of the above-mentioned fruits and vegetables, or the majority of what we eat, were natural plants or trees to California. These goods came from the southern United States and Puerto Rico, Haiti, Spain, Mexico, and South America.

Each has a story to tell. Countries such as China, Japan, India, the Pacific islands (coconuts and pineapples), Sri Lanka, Egypt, Arabia, France, Italy, and Germany have contributed to our recent history of our culinary likes and dislikes.

*Continued on page 4*

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# LOOKING FOR YOUNG HISTORY SCIENTISTS

Continued from page 3

In learning about the food from other countries, my new scientists, you will also be learning about how people grew their food and how they prepared it. Okay, so I've included some social studies and geography into the reading list. All these subjects relate to one another and will be fun to read about.

There are a lot of good ideas here for some art work, and some pictures

to draw and paint. Okay then, we'll throw in art, too.

Learning about what we eat helps us to choose those foods that are best for us to stay healthy and allows us to do all the fun activities and sports that both young and the old enjoy.

So, boys and girls, adults—and our seniors—I plan on meeting you when school is out for some good old Pinole Library time.

## PHS PRODUCTS FOR SALE

**W**e have postcards, greeting cards, and refrigerator magnets—featuring photos from our book, *Images of America: Pinole*. You can order them from our website: [www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org). To order on-line, print the order form and mail it with your check to the Pinole Historical Society, P.O. Box 285, Pinole, CA 94564.

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# POLICE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR OLD PATCHES

**P**inole Police Detective Sergeant Matt Messier, a history enthusiast who has taken on the task of preserving and displaying the police department's history, is seeking information

about what year the department changed its patches and uniforms from tan to blue.

The original patch was a motorcycle-type patch. The department does not have any of these patches, and says Detective

Sergeant Messier, "We are desperately looking for one for our display."

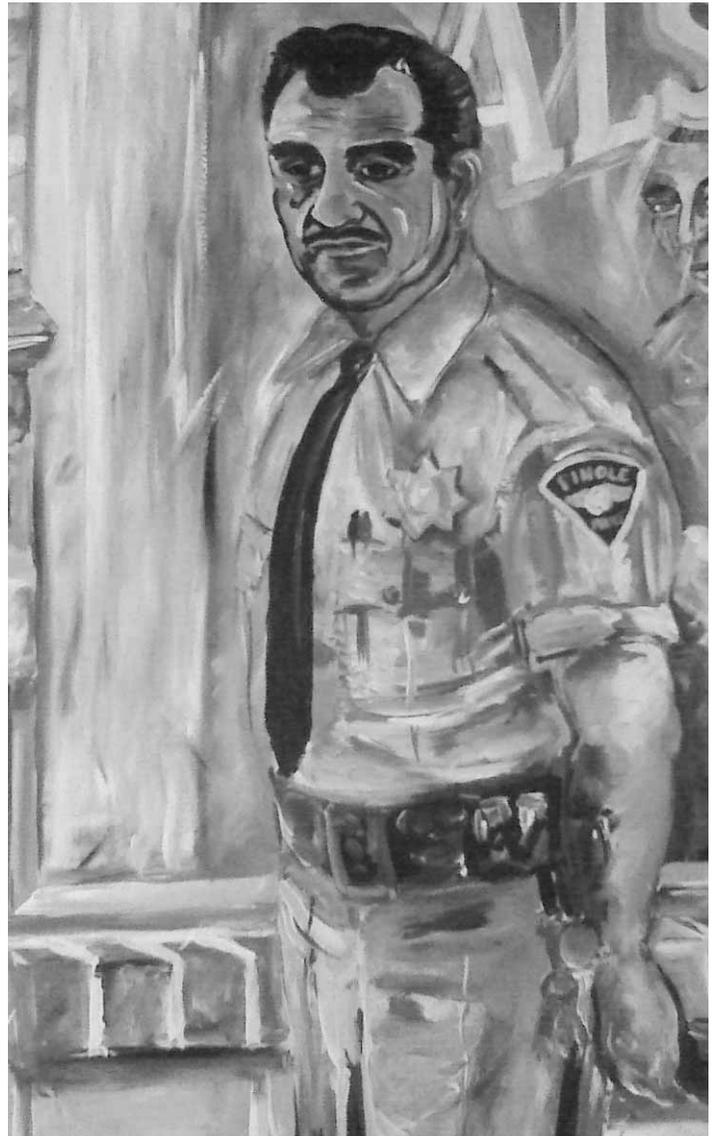
Detective Sergeant Messier has put together an impressive display of police photos and arti-

facts in the Pinole Public Safety Facility.

If anyone reading this newsletter can help Detective Sergeant Messier, please contact him at (510) 741-2077.



**LEFT: Sgt. Lowell Boyle (with patch on sleeve) and Chief Hugh Young, 1960. RIGHT: Painting on the wall of the Alley Cafe, featuring a policeman with the triangular patch. (courtesy of Matt Messier.)**



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# DR. JOE HONORED BY PINOLE GARDEN CLUB

**T**he Pinole Garden Club honored Pinole Historical Society founder Dr. Joe Mariotti (seated in photo, with his family) at its annual Arbor Day ceremony on March 22 by planting a Crape Myrtle tree in his honor at Bayfront Park.

Dr. Mariotti, a retired orthopaedic surgeon who was the team physician for Pinole Valley High School for 32 years, is a longtime environmentalist and conservationist who has served on the Save Contra Costa Shoreline Committee, Hercules

Environmental Resources Committee, Urban Creek Council, East Bay Regional Parks Advisory Committee, Contra Costa County Plastic Recycling Advisory Committee, Coastal Clean-Up, West Contra Costa Environmental Education Committee, and the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.

He also served on the Pinole City Council and Pinole Planning Commission.

**Dr. Joe Mariotti (seated) and his family at the March 22 event.**




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## VOLUNTEER ON COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY

**M**ore than 200 volunteers are sought for a variety of half-day community projects at the first Pinole Community Service Day on Saturday, June 4, which will pair volunteers with local organizations for three-hour projects, followed by a free thank-you barbecue in Fernandez Park.

Download a volunteer format this link — [www.ci.pinole.ca.us/live/news/com\\_service.html](http://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/live/news/com_service.html).

For more information, send an e-mail to [PinoleCSD@gmail.com](mailto:PinoleCSD@gmail.com).



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# MAY 19 PHS MEETING FEATURES NEW HERCULES BOOK

**A**uthor and historian Jennifer Posedel will offer a Power-Point presentation based on a new pictorial history titled *Images of America: Hercules*, at the Pinole Historical Society's May 19 general membership and annual meeting.

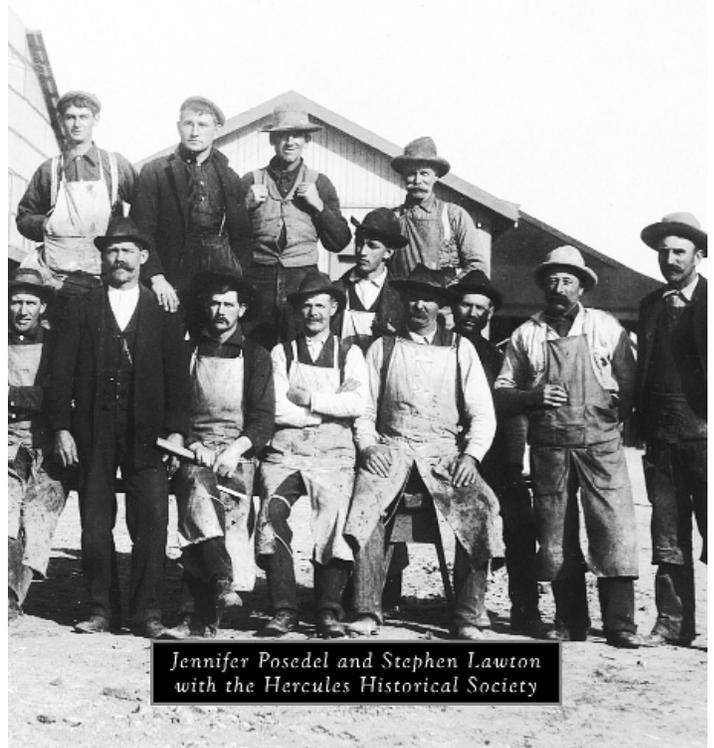
The book chronicles the history of the town and its industrial past from 1879 to the 1970s. Jennifer and co-author Stephen Lawton collaborated with the Hercules Historical Society on the book, scheduled for release in May.

Jennifer's presentation will draw from official company photography used in the book, as well as from family albums of former Herculites. They recall the era when Hercules was a pioneer in the manufacture of dynamite and the world's leading producer of TNT.

The history of Hercules includes a series of powerful explosions that occurred between 1882 and 1953, leaving many children fatherless. Also depicted will be the community life that revolved around the company-built homes, the clubhouse, bachelor's lodging, dining hall, library, hotel, and post office. The presentation will include many unpublished photographs.

PHS meetings are free and open to the public.

IMAGES  
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Jennifer Posedel and Stephen Lawton with the Hercules Historical Society

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## PHS PHOTOS AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS

**I**n addition to our photos at the Pinole Library, two area resuarants feature photos from the Pinole Historical Society archives on their walls.

Tina's Place, the long-awaited breakfast-lunch-dinner cafe downtown Pinole, and Jameson's Restaurant in Richmond, below the Century Theatres at Hilltop, sport photos chronicling our city's history.

The PHS thanks Tina's and Jameson's for keeping our history alive.

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# Back in the day

By George Vincent

## SAMUEL JOHNSON TENNENT—PROFILE OF A PINOLE PIONEER

**T**he main thoroughfare of Pinole's downtown section bears the name of this area's first non-Spanish-speaking resident.

From his arrival at El Rancho Pinole in 1848 until his death in 1886, the influence of Samuel J. Tennent on the local landscape was considerable. He was as versatile in his lifetime as he was controversial, and he was a man who excelled at adapting to his surroundings.

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1818, Tennent became a physician before his nineteenth birthday. Two of Tennent's brothers were also British physicians who migrated to the Contra Costa area.

Young Doctor Tennent began his professional career as a ship's doctor in 1842 aboard the whaling ship Ranger. Setting up his practice in the Hawaiian Islands, his reputation soon earned him an appointment as personal physician to the royal family of King Kamehameha III. Tennent was also appointed as tax collector for the Port of



**Sanuel J. Tennent**

Lahaina, Maui.

An outstanding feature of the Tennent family was its strong kinship ties as well as an open eye for economic gain. This family linkage, together with the discovery of gold in California, brought S.J. Tennent to California in 1848. Dr. Sam's brother, Archibald, had arrived in California in 1845. Archibald's letters praising the California scene and its economic possibilities lured Dr. Sam here.

Tennent family lore recounts how Dr. Sam saved the life of the captain of the vessel taking Tennent, his horses, and servants, to California. In return, the grateful captain presented Tennent with a brilliant diamond set in a gold lion's claw.

This gift was later to become Rafaela Martinez' engagement ring.

The California landscape of 1848 was in a process of turbulent transition from Mexican to American rule. Tennent's study of the Spanish language before his arrival in San Francisco was most likely influ-

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# SAMUEL JOHNSON TENNENT—PROFILE OF A PINOLE PIONEER

enced by his communications with Archibald, who was aware of the large Spanish-speaking population of the Bay Area who were still in possession of large land holdings called "ranchos."

Dr. Sam decided to join the exodus from San Francisco and open a practice in Sacramento near the gold fields. The winter of 1848 found him

in San Francisco, where he met Colonel William Smith. Smith had become business agent for the Martinez family. He had married Susanna, the fifth Martinez daughter.

A letter of introduction was given to Tennent from the Smiths. He was to present this letter to the Martinez family of El Rancho Pinole while making his way overland to Sacramento. The delivery of this letter proved to be a chance opportunity for Tennent, and a life-changing event as well.

March 1849, saw the arrival of Dr. S.J. Tennent at



**Rafaela Martinez Tennent**

the three adobe homes deep in Pinole Valley. Center of activity on the nearly 18,000 acre El Rancho Pinole, the adobes were to afford Tennent more than just an introduction to the pleasantries of Spanish-speaking "Californio" rancho life.

The old family patriarch, Don Ygnacio Martinez, had died in June of 1848. His eldest son, Jose,

was now head of the family. Don Ygnacio's widow, Doña Martina, lived in the largest adobe home with her three unmarried daughters—Doña Encarnación, Doña Rafaela, and Doña Maria Concepción.

The 31-year-old Tennent was enamored by the blue-eyed Rafaela. His Sacramento venture ended in Pinole Valley. Conversion to Catholicism soon followed, as did marriage, on September 8, 1849.

**Next issue:** Part 2 of the Tennent family story.



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# ANCESTOR OF GENERAL VALLEJO BESTOWS PHOTOS

**A** question posed to the Pinole Historical Society last year turned into a donation of several photos by a PHS member and descendant of General Mariano Vallejo, Mexico's Comandante in Northern California in the 1830s.

Kenneth Swenson, of Pleasant Hill, queried the PHS July 26, 2010, about his grandfather, Andrew Swenson, a Pinole resident at the turn of the 20th century.

**He wrote:** "I noticed in the book, *Images of America: Pinole*, that the present day Antlers Tavern was called the Swenson and Lewis Saloon in 1910. Do you know if my grandfather, Andrew Swenson, who lived on John Street from about 1903 to 1956, was in some way associated with the Swenson and Lewis Saloon?"

"Also, do you know of

any archival obituaries for Pinole residents? I am interested in October 6, 1907, when my great grandfather, Andrew Swenson, reportedly died in Pinole according to cemetery records at the Mt. View Cemetery in Oakland.

"Thank you for your consideration of these matters; any assistance is greatly appreciated!"

**We replied:** "George Vincent, our historian, believes Andrew might have been associated with the saloon. You can check the 1900 and 1910 census; Andrew Swenson would be listed, along with his occupation. If it says "saloon-keeper," that's the man. Pinole was in Township #11 in Contra Costa County at that time.

"The census can be checked at the family history library at the Church of Latter Day Saints, Oakland Temple, in Oakland.



**Andrew Swenson and Anita Vallejo Swenson in their wedding portrait, taken September 23, 1903. Anita was the granddaughter of General Mariano Vallejo, Mexico's Northern California Comandante in 1835.**



**Patrons playing billiards at the Swenson and Lewis Saloon, around 1900. The saloon, at the northwest corner of Main Street and Tennent Avenue, was the forerunner of Antlers Tavern.**

Or, check online at Ancestry.com: [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)."

On March 21, we heard from Kenneth again. **He wrote:** "I checked the 1910 census, and Andrew Swenson was listed in Pinole Township as a 'saloon merchant.' I also found Andrew's World War I draft registration in 1918, where he listed his occupation as 'retail liquor dealer.' He must have been part of the Swenson and Lewis Saloon that you referred to in

your book.

"Incidentally, I dropped by the Antlers Tavern last week, where I met and had a cordial visit with Geoff Torretta. With you and Geoff as my experience, my childhood memories that Pinole people were always friendly, remains firmly intact."

A few days later, the PHS received from Kenneth several photos of Andrew Swenson and his wife, Anita. They were Kenneth's grandparents. We are very appreciative.

# PHS interviews on city of Pinole website

**M**iss one of our programs on Pinole Community TV?

Not a problem. The city's website now has a dedicated section devoted to PINOLE HISTORY on its "Videos Online" page.

You can view the numerous PHS programs right

on your computer. Go to [www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html](http://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/about/videos.html) and scroll down to PINOLE HISTORY. You'll find our interviews, Veterans' Day programs, George Vincent's Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Pinole, and the very fine PCTV-produced, 12-part series based on the Historic Walking Tour brochure. It's great TV!



**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.**

[www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PinoleHistoricalSociety.org)

**The Pinole Historical Society is grateful for donations of artifacts, photos, newspapers, memorabilia—anything of historical significance.**

**Please contact us at [info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PinoleHistoricalSociety.org) or call (510) 724-9507.**

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# POLICE HONOR FIRST CHIEF, HUGH YOUNG

**P**art of the Pinole Police Department's history display at its headquarters is devoted to the city's first officer and first chief, Hugh Young.

Young joined the force in 1943 as a traffic officer, and on his Harley-

Davidson he made Pinole internationally known as the United States' deadliest speed trap.

He handed out some 200 speeding tickets a month as motorists sped through the one-traffic-light town in the pre-Interstate 80 days.

Robert Ripley, of

"Ripley's Believe It Or Not," featured Young in one of his columns.

Young was an automobile mechanic and a part-time deputy for the sheriff's department when he became the city's only cop. In 1950, the Pinole City Council appointed him chief, a title he held until his retirement in 1967.

He oversaw a department that grew to 14

officers in a city that grew from slightly more than 1,000 residents when he became chief to more than 12,000 by the time he retired.

— *The PHS thanks Detective Sergeant Matt Messier of the Pinole Police Department for his donation of a newspaper clipping about Young's retirement and several photos of him.*



**Pinole Traffic Officer Hugh Young in 1943, at age 38. He became the city's first police chief in 1950.**

## Friends of Pinole Library donations to PHS

**T**he PHS thanks the Friends of the Pinole Library for its donation of two brochures from the fourth annual Pinole Historical Appreciation Day in 1973 and a 1964 Fiesta del Pinole program.



## Pinole Youth Center Pinole Recreation

### Pinole Summer Camp

- Sports, cooking, games, arts, crafts.
- Pinole Parks, Swim Center, Pinole Sports & Fitness Center, the Pinole Bowling Alley, and much more.
- Once per week an exciting full day field trip to different locations around the Bay Area, based on age.

**Dates:** June 13th - August 19th, 10 Weeks

**Times:** 8:30am-6:30pm (Early Care 7:00a-8:30a)

**Fee:** Res. \$120 per week, Non-Res. \$140 per week, Early Care \$25 per week

### After School Programming

Safe, supervised, and fun programs with homework help, arts, sports, computer access, games, and workshops. WCCUSD Dismissal - 5pm.

Transportation is provided by Youth Center staff driving city vehicles at an additional from: Collins, Ellerhorst, Tara Hills, Stewart Schools, and Pinole Middle.

Two evening classes are offered 5 - 6pm:  
Homework Club or Activity club.

Program begins first day of School, August 23, 2011  
Register and pay \$25 May 2nd to hold your space.

**Please contact us for additional information and details.**  
Pinole Youth Center, 635 Tennent Avenue, 510-724-9004  
[youth@ci.pinole.ca.us](mailto:youth@ci.pinole.ca.us), [www.ci.pinole.ca.us/youth](http://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/youth)



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**The Pinole Historical Society promotes awareness and appreciation of history through preservation and education, and chronicles the city's heritage for current and future generations.**

## THIRD ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST IN PINOLE SCHOOLS

**O**ur annual essay contest in Pinole schools this year asks students at Ellerhorst, Collins, Shannon, Stewart, and St. Joseph schools, Pinole Middle School, and Pinole Valley High School to use resources at home, the Pinole Library, at school, and on the Internet, to write an essay about Pinole's history or their family's history.

Awards will be presented at these schools June 6 and June 7 by Edward M. Downer III, Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Mechanics Bank—our sponsor—and Pinole Historical Society President Marcia Kalapus. Awards will include certificates to the authors of the best essays in each grade, and savings bonds—courtesy of Mechanics Bank—to Grand Prize winners.

Grand Prize winners will also receive a copy of Images of America: Pinole, from the Pinole Historical Society.



**Shannon Elementary School's Esmeralda Topete (center) received a 2010 essay-contest award. Mechanics Bank Chairman of the Board Edward Downer III, Mechanics Bank Community Affairs Officer Fernanda Rodrigues, PHS President Marcia Kalapus, and then-Mayor Debbie Long (L-R), presented the award.**



**Presenting 2010 awards at St. Joseph School.**



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# PINOLE LIBRARY THE PLACE FOR HISTORY RESEARCH

By **Ian Richards**  
**Acting Senior Community Library Manager**  
**Pinole Library**

**A** Contra Costa County Library card is an essential resource for history enthusiasts.

A library card provides access to thousands of books, DVDs, audio books, downloadable media, computers and more, all free of charge.

The library has an extensive local history collection with materials on Pinole, El Sobrante, and the surrounding communities.

The Contra Costa County Library Genealogy Guide (<http://guides.ccclib.org/genealogy>) outlines resources available within the library and the surrounding communities for local history buffs eager to start their own family tree.

A library card also allows user to access exciting new programs and services such as "Discover & Go." This program provides library cardholders resid-

ing in Contra Costa County with free passes to local museums and cultural institutions.

A first of its kind, Discover & Go provides access to passes that can be printed online rather than traditional physical passes that must be picked up and returned to the library. Each Discover & Go pass expires immediately after the reservation date—no returns required and no possibility for overdue fines!

This unique program allows library users to make reservations online by date or by venue and immediately print out a pass or print later for free at any library. Customers without Internet access can reserve a pass by telephone or in person.

For the full list of Discover & Go participating organizations go to [http://ccclib.org/press\\_releases/discover\\_go.html](http://ccclib.org/press_releases/discover_go.html).

Come visit us at the Pinole Library and get your card today. While you're there, check out our new photo exhibit, courtesy of the Pinole Historical Society.

We look forward to meeting you.





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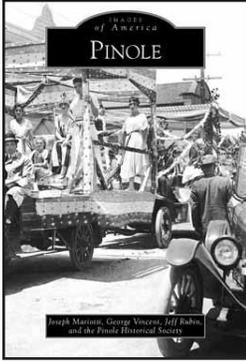
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