



# Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

# The Cornerstone

Spring 2008

Vol. 18, Issue 3

## Old Orchards and New Preservation Efforts

By Helene Davis

Spring is in the air; as I write this, the blossoms are on the trees. By the time you read this, they have probably come and gone, but they certainly brought me back to the old days of the “Valley of Hearts Delight.” It still existed when I was growing up here in Cupertino in the early 1960s. My friends and I used to sneak into the orchard across the street from our homes (the Cali’s, I think) to make forts in the tall grass underneath the trees. *(See photo of me with two of my childhood friends in the orchard. That’s me on the right!)*



Speaking of orchards, we do have a hidden gem of an orchard here in Cupertino. Many of you may know of it, the Stockmeir orange grove, on the Stockmeir property now owned by the City of Cupertino. Although the orange orchard does not produce stone fruit – as did so many orchards here in the past – it is still an amazing asset to our community.

There is great news concerning this orchard. At the Feb. 19 Cupertino City Council meeting, the Council conducted a mid-year budget review and approved funds for hiring an orchardist, who will initiate a study for rehabilitating the Stockmeir orchard. After assessing the health of the current mature orchard, including soil analysis and irrigation needs, the orchardist will make recommendations on how to proceed in rehabilitating the orchard. Exciting indeed! This area will be opened up to the public during phase two of the Stevens Creek Restoration Park Project, scheduled for the year 2011.

Also at the Council meeting, members approved the formation of an ad hoc Historical Preservation Committee. Last year, the City Council directed the Planning Department to once again look into a Historical Preservation Policy for Cupertino. Ten years ago, a similar Historic Research Committee did impressive work (many I’m sure were historical

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### Message from the President

## If It's April, It Must Be Active at the Museum

By Nicole Rau



This year, the Cupertino Historical Society and Museum will host a large number of visitors at the museum during the Lunar New Year Parade and the Cherry Blossom Festival. We expect up to 200 visitors or more per day during these festivals. Last year, during the Moon Festival alone, the museum had over 400 people visit our exhibit in one day! On average, April is our busiest time, typically drawing 600 to 1,000 people during the month!

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# Manager's Report: Expect an Active April at Museum

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During the 2008 Cherry Blossom Festival, the museum will feature new displays to go with our current exhibit, “East Meets West – Weddings and Cultures of Cupertino.” We will showcase a gift from the San Jose Museum of Art – a Japanese loom that belonged to Fumiko Pentler, a former resident of Cupertino. Along with the loom, the display will include photos of Fumiko, silk cocoons, devices used to spin silk, Japanese pillows, tapestries, and kimonos, all blending with our current collection of early Cupertino Wedding Gowns from circa 1900. If you haven’t had a chance to see this exhibit yet we encourage you to do so!

In August 2008, the museum will open a new exhibit on Henry J. Kaiser and the Permanente Cement Company.

*“A large limestone deposit led Henry J. Kaiser to Permanente Creek, where he established his quarry and cement production plant. Since its opening on Christmas Day, 1939, the plant has undergone continued growth and modernization, and now contributes millions of dollars annually to the area’s economy. There were major building projects going on around the country during the quarry’s early years. Henry Kaiser had a hand in building many of them, including the Bay Bridge, Shasta Dam, Chicago subways, and dry docks in Pearl Harbor. Over the years, thousands of local residents have counted on the plant for their jobs. Today the quarry and plant occupies 20 acres of a 3,400-acre hillside site west of Cupertino.”*

## **From the Ground Up: How Business Grew In Cupertino**

*A past CHS exhibit Curated by Leslie Mehren*



In other news, I will be learning more about historic preservation in April, while attending the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual California Preservation Conference, “Balance & Complexity: The Vineyard and Beyond,” in Napa Valley. I grew up in the beautiful Napa Valley, which is rich in agricultural history and historical resources, like Cupertino, and has faced many changes in its development as a city. Among workshops that I will be attending are: Financing Historic Preservation, Plenary Session at the Napa Valley Opera House, Building Support for

Surveys and Historic Preservation Programs, Building Maintaining, and Repairing Local Historical Preservation Programs, Gathering, Managing, and Preserving Documentation for Historic Properties, and Sustainability and Historic Preservation. The event also includes several walking tours of historic sites in the area.

I am very excited about returning to my hometown for this conference and look forward to bringing back useful information to the museum. Spring is indeed an exciting time at CHS and I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events!

## **Message from the President**

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society members) in identifying, researching the history of, and rating 32 potentially historic sites. Unfortunately, at that time, the Council determined that a historic preservation ordinance was not warranted.

This time around the parameters for the committee will be to:

- Limit the policies to public/semi-public and commercial properties
- Update and re-rank the existing historic structure or site list
- Define public hearing/review/noticing processes
- Define method of preservation (this could include physical preservation, commemorative measures (plaques, recycling of architectural elements), and proper disclosure of significance (special zoning or covenants).

We look forward to seeing how this all plays out and we will be sure to keep you posted. Enjoy your spring!

# Membership News

*Membership gifts to the Cupertino Historical Society and Museum provide a base of support for programs, services and general operating. We appreciate the support and generosity of new members and continuing members.*

## New Members

Patricia and Welko Gasich  
Roberta and Marshall Hollimon

## Renewing Members

Richard and Sharon Blaine  
Ted Bollinger  
John Bruzus  
Audrey Butcher  
Malkah and Donald Carothers  
Michael and Sonja Cook  
Robert F. Hetz  
Marion Alice Jarrett  
Letizia Picchetti  
Bruce and Rose Woolpert

*Thanks*

For their generous support, a special thanks to:

- Alotta's Deli
- Wells Fargo
- Alan Stocklmeir
- Everyone who attended our Fall fundraising event
- Donna Austin for donating 15 Arcadia Press books to the CHS library to be used for reference covering the history of our area!

## New Exhibit Opens in August

### *Henry J. Kaiser & the Permanente Cement Company*

Constructed in 1939, the Permanente Cement Company, overlooking Cupertino's Permanente Creek, was one of many industrial enterprises of Henry J. Kaiser. Inspired by *Together We Build*, a 1989 booklet celebrating Kaiser Cement Corporation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this upcoming exhibit will document the natural geology of our foothills, the evolution of the Permanente Cement Plant, the cement making process, and the man behind the company.



## BULLETIN BOARD

### Upcoming Events

**April 5:** Volunteer Meetings in Quinlan Center, 9 a.m. in Museum

**April 23-26:** California Preservation Foundation's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, "Balance & Complexity: The Vineyard and Beyond"

**April 26-27:** Cherry Blossom Festival at Memorial Park

### Save the Date!

**June 22:** "The Good Ol' Summertime" BBQ & Ice Cream Fundraising Event! (at Picchetti Winery)

Wine tasting, barbershop quartet, and fun summertime games! Watch for details!

**June 24:** Annual Meeting & Potluck Speaker Event at Quinlan Community Center, Cupertino Room, 6:30-8 p.m., Speaker TBA. Members will elect and nominate the new slate of officers.

### Board meetings, open to all members

**April 20,** 11 a.m. call Museum for details

**May 21,** 5:30 p.m., Quinlan Community Center, Social Room

**June 18,** 5:30 p.m. location TBA

## Cupertino Historical Society Membership Application

☐ New    ☐ Renewal

☐ Individual \$35    ☐ Family \$50  
☐ Patron \$125    ☐ Sponsor \$250

Total Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to do more...here is my tax-deductible donation  
of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to Cupertino Historical  
Society and mail to:*

The Cupertino Historical Society & Museum  
10185 N Stelling Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014

Thank You!



## Yes, We Can Scan!

Thanks to the memorial Technology Fund, CHS was able to purchase a high-quality RX580 Epson Photo All-in-One Scanner, along with an HP Printer/Scanner/Copier/Fax.

This new equipment enables members to scan and share old photos and documents with CHS – and now the Museum can scan/preserve our current collection for future generation.

We are also in the process of purchasing new technology that will allow us to share Cupertino's history in the upcoming exhibit.

## Memorium Legacies

We are deeply grateful to the Burrell Leonard Estate for the lasting legacy to CHS.

We have also received donations in memory of Martin Rowe, for which we are equally grateful.

## Leave a Legacy

One way to have a lasting impact on your community is to help the Cupertino Historical Society & Museum preserve our history for future generations. We welcome an opportunity to talk with you about including the Society and Museum in your will or in other planned gifts.

Please contact Nicole Rau at (408) 973-1495 or via email at [cuphistorysoc@juno.com](mailto:cuphistorysoc@juno.com).

## A Call for Volunteers

The time a volunteer spends at the Cupertino Historical Museum is often just as rewarding to him or her as it is to us.

If you have a love for the community, please join ours and help us show off Cupertino's past and present.

If you are available two Saturday afternoons a month, come down and interpret Cupertino history for our museum visitors and keep our Museum open!

Anyone interested in volunteering with the Cupertino Historical Society and Museum should call 408-973-1495 or email us at [cuphistorysoc@juno.com](mailto:cuphistorysoc@juno.com).





*Fumiko with loom now on display. She was working on this tapestry when she died.*

## This Silk Road Leads Straight to Cupertino

Fumiko Pentler was a Cupertino resident who had a dream of one day opening a silk museum in the city. Unfortunately, she passed away before she could realize that dream. But, CHS will carry out a portion of her wish when the museum displays the Japanese loom that Fumiko used to craft her beautiful work – such as pillows, tapestries and rugs.

The loom and other silk-making items are on loan from the San Jose Museum of Art for the upcoming Cherry Blossom Festival in April. New kimonos also will be on display then, as well. Fumiko was a dedicated silk weaver. She raised her own silkworms and extracted and made her own thread from the cocoons. CHS extends a special thanks to the San Jose Museum for the use of these fascinating display items!



*Fumiko Pentler made her own thread from homegrown silkworms*

## Some Facts and History About Silk

Among insects, the silkworm ranks second only to the honey bee in economic importance. The English word “silk” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *seolc*, and the Anglo-Saxon word for silkworm was *seolcwyrn*.

The silk industry undoubtedly began in ancient China; the details of its origin are hidden in legends and fables. According to Chinese tradition, Si-Ling-Chi, the wife of the famous Emperor Huang-Ti, was especially interested in sericulture (production of raw silk by raising silk worms). She is credited with the invention of silk reeling. Taxes were paid with silk and silk became a medium of exchange in China. Finished silk was exported to the Western World, but the manner in which it was produced was kept a closely guarded secret.

The “Silk Road” was opened about 126 BCE. It was the longest road in the ancient world, extending over more than 6,000 miles.

In 55 CE (A.D.) the Byzantine Emperor Justinian persuaded two Persian missionary monks to try to smuggle silkworm eggs and mulberry seeds out of China by hiding the eggs and seeds in the hollows of their bamboo canes. These monks succeeded within two years and thus sericulture was introduced into the Western World in the year 552 CE (A.D.)

Silk was first produced in California in 1860, by Louis Prevost of San Jose. To encourage silkworm raising, the CA legislature offered a bounty of \$250 for every planting of mulberry trees which produced 5,000 two year old trees. In 1869, a group of Japanese pioneer immigrants came to Gold Hill near Auburn and established the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony.

*\*Excerpts from an article written by Fumiko Pentler, 1971.*

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## Mission Statement

The mission of the Cupertino Historical Society and Museum is to create a passion for lifelong learning, preserve a vanishing past and serve as a bridge to a shared future. We believe that reflecting a broad representation of experiences, perspectives and cultures encourages stewardship and interaction, honoring the past and enhancing the lives of current and future citizens.

## Cupertino Historical Museum

Located in the Quinlan Community Center, the museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is free and open to the public.



## Board of Directors

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Nicole Rau

Museum Manager