



# Cupertino Historical Society & Museum The Cornerstone

Spring 2009

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## A Look Back, A Look Forward

By Helene Davis

I have been on the board of the Cupertino Historical Society now for six years, the last two as President. It has been an eventful, challenging and rewarding two years. I'm excited about the future of the society and feel confident that I am leaving it in good shape as I pass the mantle on to my successor.

### Message from the President

Looking back, I'm very pleased at what we've accomplished. We have two amazing staff members at the Museum, Marie Raymond, our Office Manager, and Julie DeVere, our Collections Registrar. There are two new computers in the office; both are networked and utilizing Past Perfect

software to organize our collections and membership. Our new exhibit on the Kaiser Permanente plant is up and running and we are very proud of the result. There is a possible collaboration in the works with the city and other interested parties on the Stockmeir property.

Thank you to the board, staff, docents, members, and the community for your support and for the opportunity to serve you as President these past two years.



## Legend of Elisha Stephens Lives On

By Donna Austin

When I look at Elisha Stephens' one and only picture, I think he must have been a rugged, independent individual. He posed for this picture at the request of Phoebe McClellan Payne, wanting to appear as if he was looking through the trees of a forest with his everyday clothes and large stovepipe hat. He cut the branches to make a frame so that the San Jose photographer could get it just right.

Stephens led the first wagons over the Sierra Nevada with no casualties in 1844. He was elected captain of the wagon train because he had experience as a mountain man, a beaver hunter and a blacksmith. He later served under Commodore Stockton in the Mexican War in 1846-48.

The first American resident to homestead 160 acres in the Westside (Cupertino) in 1848, Stephens grew fruit trees, mission grapes and blackberries. He called his place Blackberry Farm. In

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### The Barbecue Is Coming!

Cupertino Historical Society's annual Barbecue will be held at the Picchetti Winery on June 28. Make plans now to join us for our annual summertime celebration!

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**Past Presidents Mark McKenna, Donna Austin, Charles Liggett, Sharon Blaine, Charles Newman and Helene Davis at exhibit opening.**

## Museum Opens Kaiser Cement Exhibit

The Cupertino Historical Society and Museum held its VIP showing and reception Thursday, March 26 at the Quinlan Community Center. A Grand Opening for the public followed on Sunday afternoon. Board members and volunteers pitched in to organize the exhibit and were on hand to greet supporters and friends. The floors have been sanded and varnished, the walls painted and everything looks great. If you missed the opening, come by on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to view the exhibit. --Donna Austin



# Thanks

### **Generous donors help provide new equipment**

Thanks to our many generous donors – recently and over the past few years – we have been able to significantly upgrade our museum office equipment and software.

The donations have come from three primary sources: the Rotary Club of Cupertino, which made a grant of \$3400; Hewlett-Packard Corp., which donated a new laptop computer; and many of our members and friends who have made memorial gifts and donations totaling several hundreds of dollars.

Here is what these generous donations have allowed us to purchase:

- Past Perfect museum software
- Flat storage files
- Laser Jet printer/fax/copier
- HP Laptop computer
- HP Desktop computer
- Epson printer/scanner
- Computer networking equipment

This new equipment will be very significant in helping us constantly improve the quality of our museum and aid in the efficiency of our operation. We are very grateful to all our donors!

*Darryl Stow, Treasurer*

# Membership News

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

## New Members

Welcome new members!

Fred and Kelly Faulhaber

## Renewing Members

Thank you for your continuing support!

Jim and Jane Asher

David and Shirley Bates

Diane and Gino Benedetti

John and Judith Bruzus

Patricia Bustamante

Audrey Butcher

Charles and Kathleen Calhan

Roy Dunn

Mary Egan

Patricia and Welko Gasich

Marion Jarrett

Myrna Jelesko

Gerald Johnson

Charles and Kathy Liggett

Angelo and Judith Marchi

Mark McKenna

Paul and Wanda Mikulaco

Kathy Nellis

Keith Peterson

Roy and Kay Roberts

Patrick and Barbara Rogers

George and Lorraine Sousa

Darryl and Dorothy Stow

Steve and Jeannie Ting

# Collections' Wish List

Here are some materials that would greatly benefit the museum collections.

Re-usable cotton gloves, package of 12	\$20
Dusting brush w/soft horsehair	\$13
Archival storage boxes	\$10 - \$13 ea.
Mylar envelopes for negatives & prints, package of 100	\$35
Archival hanging file folders, package of 25	\$22.55
Archival hat box	\$30

## Elisha Stephens

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1859, he added 155.57 acres from the Rancho San Antonio, making a total of 315.57 acres that he owned.

Stephens never married or had children. He lived alone and cooked for himself. His recipe for rattlesnake was to cut off the snake's head and hang it to let the oil drip down. Then he skinned it, cut it into small chunks, and dipped it in egg and breadcrumbs and deep-fried it. He claimed, "...rattlesnakes beat frogs all to pieces." Stephens was considered eccentric not only for his diet, but also for encouraging a couple of inventors who cluttered his yard with inventions for perpetual motion machines and steam-driven plows.

In 1859, he sold everything to George McCauley and William McClellan because it had become "too durn civilized." Stevens Creek and Stevens Creek Road were named for Elisha Stephens. In 1994, the 7,550-foot peak overlooking Donner Pass was named Mount Stephens (this was spelled correctly).

After Elisha Stephens sold out, he moved south to what is now Bakersfield and faded into obscurity. He died a pauper in 1884.

## Bulletin Board

### Board meetings

April 15	5:30 p.m.	Conference Room
May 20, 5:30 p.m.,	cancelled in lieu of annual meeting	
June 17	5:30 p.m.	Craft Room
July 15	5:30 p.m.	Social Room

**Note: Annual meeting May 20, 6:30 p.m. in the Cupertino Room.**

### Volunteer meetings

*Held in the museum at 9 a.m.*

April 11    May 9    June 13    July 11

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns at [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net)

# Montebello: The School In the Sky

By Gail Hugger

High in the Cupertino foothills, above the busy freeways and urban sprawl of Santa Clara Valley, sits a little schoolhouse where generations of children have taken their classes in a unique educational atmosphere before coming down into the valley to complete their schooling.

The Montebello School District was formed on April 1, 1892, 117 years ago - the cost to build the school and two outhouses was \$122.48. The land was donated by J.W. Corliss. The school bought 17 books with an appropriation of \$13.50. In 1898, a piano was purchased for \$200 and students through the years fondly recall the wonderful music programs that they participated in during their school years up on the hill. One of the former music teachers, Mr. Teagle, reminisced that he is still teaching down in the valley and every day he looks up at the hills, remembering the fun he had teaching music to Montebello students.

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\$13.50***

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The families that live along the winding road are a special group. Some have pioneered their land along the ridge for a century or more; some are relative newcomers, putting in fresh vineyards and carrying on the winemaking tradition of the area. Some are in high-tech careers. But the heart of Montebello Ridge is the country school house - the center of the community for students, parents, teachers and other folk up and down the road. The current principal, Alicia Mommer, is a former student from the school.

The Picchetti family has been involved with Montebello School from the beginning, having family members on the board for more than 80 years and numerous Picchetti children attended over the years. In the old days, students walked up and down steep hills and took short cuts through vineyards and farms to reach the school. By 1895, the school board was obliged to build a horse shed because a number of students rode long distances to get to the schoolhouse. Most students now come on a small school bus. The driver, Don Ertel, has driven the bus for decades. A new addition was built quite a few years ago, along with a soccer field, and the original schoolhouse is now used as the school office with photographs of the early days around the walls.

From the hillside yard separating the old school and the new addition, the view of Santa Clara Valley is tremendous on a clear day. Enriqueta Aguilar, a parent and staff member, wrote these lines to express her thoughts on Montebello:

*Montebello has...*

*Sunshine when the Silicon Valley is under fog...Clear view of the valley after a rainy day...Pure air that takes your breath away...Deer taking a stroll through the lawns...The memories you can never forget.*

Whether you call it the Valley of Heart's Delight or Silicon Valley, Montebello and its school-in-the-sky holds a very unique and special place in many hearts and memories.





## Spotlight: Collections Manager

A native of Los Altos, Julie DeVere attended local schools and earned a B.A. in art history from Sonoma State University. She completed a master's degree in Museum Studies at San Francisco State University.

"I am excited to be working with the Cupertino Historical Society Museum as its new Collections Manager," she said. "My Masters' thesis was 'Inventories Role in Collections Management,' so you know inventory is a topic I am passionate about."

Working in the museum field for the past nine years, Julie also serves as the Collections Specialist for the Campbell Historical Museum & Ainsley House, and is an independent registrar. "Besides the Campbell museums, I have had the pleasure of working for other Bay Area museums and galleries," she noted, "including the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum and History San José."

Julie is excited about the many improvements made in CHS museum space, collection storage and information management during the past few months, and credits the hard work of dedicated board members and community center staff. "We also recently moved our offsite storage to a brand new climate-controlled facility nearby. This move will help ensure our furniture collection is available for exhibit for many years to come."



**Julie DeVere**

### 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!**

Through new Past Perfect software, the museum is upgrading its older collections database, according to Julie. Used by thousands of museums across the country, Past Perfect is approved by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). "But, we would not be running our new software if it was not for our new computer systems, which allow us to update our records and better care for the objects, photos and archives in our care."

Julie noted that great improvements have been made at the museum, but "there are still a number of ongoing projects, including the reorganization of the collections, which involves a working inventory!"

### **Wanted: Volunteers**

Help keep our museum open by volunteering two Saturday afternoons a month to share Cupertino history with visitors. Call 408-973-1495 today or email us at [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net).

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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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## Museum Staff

Marie Raymond    Museum Associate  
Julie DeVere      Collections Manager