



Cupertino Historical Society & Museum  
presents

# the Cornerstone

Spring 2015

Volume 25, Issue 3

## JOE CAMARDA

By Donna Austin

I met Joe Camarda on February 27th and had such a lovely visit. He is a gentle soul that loves his family and enjoys life. He is legally blind but there wasn't much he missed.



Joe Camarda at two years old

He was drafted into the Army during the Korean War. DJ Sedgwick, a principal and superintendent in Cupertino School District, told him that if he became a corporal by the time he came home from the Army, Sedgwick would hire him. By the time his two years service was done he was a staff

sergeant. When Joe came home and showed him his stripes, the amazed Sedgwick hired him. Camarda worked for the school district from 1955 to 1981 and worked his way up from mechanic to dispatcher to manager of the department.

Joe Camarda said that the Santa Clara Valley had comparable weather as in Sicily. His parents and grandparents came and never left. His father bought land whenever he could afford to pay for it. They had 11 acres of prunes at Blaney and Hwy 280, 2 acres of cherries at Forest and Blaney. He rattled off different properties they owned. They cut cots (apricots) and picked prunes and cherries.

Joe loved fishing. He fished for trout in the dam, on Stevens Creek or Bollinger Creek and fished crawdads below the dam. He and his friends would bring salt and

pepper shakers and build a fire along the creek. As soon as they caught their fish, they fried them over the fire and sprinkled them with salt and pepper and ate them right there. He said there was nothing that tasted so good. He used a V shaped stick or a steel rod and wired it to cook. One time he was in an electric motor boat trolling for fish at the dam. He had a 1 burner stove, a frying pan, a bottle of cooking oil and flour in a paper bag. When the fish was caught they handed it to him and he shook the fish in the paper bag of flour and used the oil in the frying pan to cook the trout. The superintendent of Mariani's Fruit, Mum Ari, was fishing and came along side them. Ari said to Joe that he smelled cooking. Joe pointed to his stove in the boat. Ari said, "Leave it to you to find a way!"

While I was there stories kept rolling out of Joe. My pencil was flying. He told me about Stella Kester. She was famous in Cupertino for more than just running a local bar called Stella's. One day the county came by and asked her to cut down her giant oak tree that was right at the hairpin curve of McClellan near her bar because it inhibited traffic. She chewed the county out and told them she would not cut her tree because it was part of nature and very beautiful. A couple of young guys, Ivan Billich and John Gasich heard the story and thought they would play a trick. Stella closed her bar at 2:00 a.m. sharp every night. They waited until she drove away and then got their two way saw and started on the oak tree. They cut through the early hours, taking drinks in between to sustain themselves in this heavy work. Around dawn, the whole tree fell across the McClellan curve and they took off for a much needed rest. When Stella discovered the loss, she was ready to sue the county for sneaking in the night and cutting her tree. She was furious, and she never found out who the real culprits were and all the ones in the know kept quiet. That was some trick.

Camarda Continued on page 3...



## Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

### Mission Statement

We preserve and illuminate Cupertino's past to inspire youth, strengthen the sense of community, and shape a better future by making Cupertino history relevant and available to all.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donna Austin | *President*  
 Helene Davis | *VP - Administration*  
 Don Sun | *VP - Fund Development*  
 Bill Kerr | *Treasurer*  
 Jane Alvarado | *Secretary*  
 Darryl Stow | *Immediate Past President*  
 Sharon Bryan  
 D. Michael Foulkes  
 Gail Fretwell-Hugger  
 Shannon Patrick Lee  
 William Mannion  
 Mahesh Nihalani  
 Mark McKenna  
 Darcy Paul  
 Rachelle Sander  
 Sean Sullivan  
 Steve Ting

### MUSEUM STAFF

Ragini Sangameswara | *Associate Director*

### TRAVELING TRUNK DOCENTS

Sonja Cook | *Coordinator*  
 Gail Fretwell-Hugger  
 Shari Kerr  
 Monica Rodriguez  
 Sean Sullivan

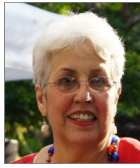
### NEWSLETTER STAFF

Donna Austin, Helene Davis, Ragini Sangameswara

*The Cornerstone* is published quarterly by the Cupertino Historical Society, a private, non-profit organization.

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Donna Austin, President



We had a wonderful International Night with living history happening right here in Cupertino. There was delicious food, dessert from Whole Foods, and some really great entertainment. That is what makes history so much fun. Bonnie Belche, the history teacher of the year from Monta Vista loves history too and gave a wonderful talk about how she inspires students to find history in 5 of their generations. I laughed when I saw The Family Circus in the San Jose Mercury News. It is so true that the "...world keeps makin' more..." history.



I interviewed Joe Camarda about what Cupertino was like in the early days where everyone knew everyone by name coming down the road. It was a fun time with so many stories. I hope we can set up a story table in our museum to hear your stories that are now history.

We are looking forward to our Annual Meeting in May. We will be having an ice cream social, voting for our slate of officers for the board, and hearing the barbershop quartet called "The Town Square Harmonizers". Please come and celebrate with our hardworking board and enjoy a fun evening.

Speaking of the word enjoy, our yearly "Sip of History" will be held at Cooper Garrod's this year on June 28<sup>th</sup>. We always have such a wonderful time and it helps to support the Cupertino Historical Society.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our events or volunteering in our museum. Just contact us at [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net) or call 408-973-1495.

Thank you,

*Donna M. Austin*

Donna Austin



# CHS ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

Refreshments 6:30 p.m. Election of Board 7:00 p.m. Performance 7:10 p.m.

Quinlan Community Center, Cupertino Room, 10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino.



Have some good old fashion fun! Come hear the **Town Square Harmonizers Barbershop Quartet!**

## Enjoy an ice cream social!

Meet other members of the society and hear what they think about history. This is your chance to let us know what you like about CHS and what you would like to see more of in the future!



**RSVP:** 408.973.1495 or Email: [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net)

Admission is FREE but donations are always welcome!

Camarda Continued from page 1...

Joe Camarda II loves his family. He and his son Joe III have a tractor company. <http://tinyurl.com/owxhn3j>. He has a daughter Lisa who is active on Facebook's "You Know you are from Cupertino..." You can tell his children love him and are so proud of him. He had an older brother Pete Camarda, who died in 2010 and a sister Lena who died of an aneurism in 1953. He also has a sister Mary in her 90's, who lives down the block from him. In the early days before Cupertino was a city, his sister Mary worked for Ann Zarko in her beauty shop. That building where the beauty shop was, later became the first city hall when Cupertino was incorporated in 1955. His sister Mary had a tip jar at the beauty shop but seemed only to get nickels and pennies. Joe suggested Mary put some dimes and quarters in the jar to encourage customers to be more generous with their tips and it worked! What a smart little brother!

Joe Camarda thinks Cupertino is so different today. Everyone knew each other back in his time, and everyone said Cupertino (kewpertino). It was a homey place to live. He worries about the parks being enough open space for people to enjoy and the traffic clogging our streets. He thinks our schools are still the best in the country, and he realizes that all the people that are here today came basically for the same reasons his family did... great climate and great schools and a great place to live.

Joe Camarda II with his son Joe III



# TEACHING HISTORY

By William Mannion

The evening of March 4th found people gathering in Quinlan's Cupertino Room to listen to Ms Bonnie Belshe, a US History and AP History teacher with an MA in History from San Jose State University. She teaches at Monta Vista High School and made a presentation about her methods of teaching history to her students. Her students focus on primary sources, images, and oral histories captured on video tape.

I attended because I was interested in meeting her since her students interviewed me for an oral history, once in 2013 and again in 2014. They returned and presented me with DVD's of the edited tape which I enjoyed watching because it also contained oral histories of some of my neighbors.

Her PowerPoint presentation showed how she organized the persons to be interviewed into several age groups so students could capture what the people being taped thought about these period as the students asked questions pertaining to events in these periods.

For some students who preferred not to do a taped oral history, she has them create a scrapbook of photos, hand written stories, newspaper clippings and the like in response to their questions.

Talking with several attendees, I heard comments like:

*"Bonnie is a dynamic speaker who has a passion for history and she motivates her students to get out into the field and capture stories from people who lived through those times."*

*"Bonnie made me realize what great teachers, students have in our School District."*

*"It was an inspiring presentation spoken with sincere passion and expression. Her students capture peoples past history and brings it into the present."*

*"It was a wonderful presentation enjoyed by me and my wife."*

Ms. Bonnie Belshe



A big thanks to the following **CHS International Night 2015!**

## SPONSORS AND DONORS

**Gold Sponsor:** Lehigh Hanson Cement Plant

**Silver Sponsor:** Recology

**Bronze Sponsors:** Donna & Scot Austin, IvyMax, Susan & Shannon Patrick Lee, Little Tree International School, Kamal & Mahesh Nihalani, Annie Ho Realty, Sierra Tea

**Special Thanks to:** Arya Global Cuisine, Cupertino Chamber of Commerce, Recreation & Community Services, Kathy Stakey, KCR Management, TWIGS, Whole Foods, and all the performers.



Board members of the Cupertino Historical Society along with City Council members Barry Chang and Savita Vaidhyanathan



The Pledge of Allegiance



Steve Andrews, presenting an overview of Cupertino, past and present



Kathak dance by Jaya Sharma



Hula dance by Hawaiian Praise



Lion dance by Omei Academy





# THE CHS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS COMPETITION

By Sharon Bryan

With not a bang, but the quiet shushing of pens and pencils against paper, 68 intrepid high school students set about making history. The Cupertino Historical Society (CHS) has sponsored their first American history essay writing competition for Junior-level students in the Fremont Union High School District's (FUHSD) five high schools.

When it is all said and done, each winner at their high school will be rewarded for their effort with a \$500 check.

As with most endeavors worthy of note, this project took time, coordination and patience to come to fruition. Having first received Board approval in August, 2013, the project was headed by Board members Sean Sullivan and Bill Mannion. They recruited Reno DiBono, a retired teacher who has logged 40 years teaching American History at Monta Vista High School.

Beginning with FUHSD administrator Sue Lawson, the committee wove its way through FUHSD's Social Studies Departments. Special thanks to Jeff Rosado, Chair of Social Studies at Fremont High School, for his guidance in setting up the contest structure, and to the Chairs and teachers at the other high schools who invested their time and energy in this adventure.

CHS originally thought that participation by 15 -25 students would be a success. We are so pleased that the turnout was three times that number!

The competition was limited to Juniors so that winners could include the Scholarship Award in their college applications, and the essay question was confined to the period the Juniors were studying at this time, 1880 to 1945.

The competition went off like clockwork on March 30 with Proctors from the CHS Board delivering the Essay question and Blue Books to the five high schools and monitoring the allowed 50-minute essay writing time



*Reno DiBono and Gail Fretwell-Hugger reading students essays*

period. Our thanks go to Darryl Stow, Bill Kerr, Sharon Bryan, Shannon Lee, and Bill Mannion for their time that day.

The essay question was: "THE 1920S WERE A PERIOD OF TENSION BETWEEN NEW AND CHANGING ATTITUDES ON ONE HAND AND TRADITIONAL VALUES AND NOSTALGIA ON THE OTHER. WHAT LED TO THE TENSION AND IN WHAT WAYS WAS THE TENSION MANIFESTED." Participants were provided with directives for how to present, support and summarize their hypothesis.

At this time the essays are being read and graded by Reno DiBono, along with CHS Board members Gail Hugger, Sean Sullivan and Bill Mannion to make the final selection of winners.

CHS will work out the details with the five FUHSD Chairs as to when and where the winners will be announced and the checks handed to them. The initial idea was to have this happen at the Annual Awards Night at each high school in late May.

Stayed tuned for the names of the Scholarship Award winners!

# TRAVELING TRUNK

By Sonja Cook



Pictured is the group of presenters at Regnart Elementary Discovery Day in March. You may recognize Gail Hugger (long black skirt) and Sonja Cook (long print dress) in the front row with Shari Kerr in the green shirt behind Gail.

It is such a pleasure to come back each year and meet many of the same presenters. It's becoming quite a family occasion. Regnart PTO treats us to wonderful goodies at the break and at lunch and always have everything so well organized. We present to four classes over the morning.

I should add, we are also warmly welcomed at similar events at Eaton Elementary and Garden Gate Elementary, as well as at single presentations in other schools and at Senior Centers.

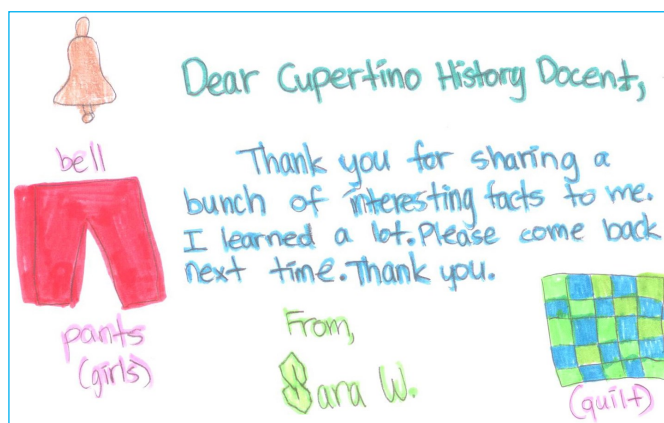
The three of us, plus Sean Sullivan, so enjoy presenting our Traveling Trunk Treasures to third graders throughout the year at schools in Cupertino. The students are amazed at life around 1900 with no electricity, a wood-burning stove for cooking and heating, kerosene lamps for lighting. They learn that recycling is not a modern idea – in 1900 and earlier, everyone reused and mended tools and clothing rather than bought new ones. Oh yes, clothing – they dissolve into giggles when they discover the modest bathing suit with a little skirt is for a man!! Imagine cutting blocks of ice, packing them in straw and hauling them down from the Sierras on a wagon. Sean delights in pointing out that the heavy candlestick phone plus the box camera won't exactly fit in your pocket but has a fraction of the capability of the modern cell phone.

Some children recognize items from their grandparents' house or things that are still used elsewhere in the world.

They learn about the family-owned orchards in this Valley, the Cupertino Union Store, riding in horse and buggy to San Jose, how long it took to get here from the East Coast and what settlers found once they arrived. It is important for the younger generation to understand what went before and to cherish the heritage of this Valley.

If you are interested in doing the same, visit the Cupertino Historical Museum in the Quinlan Center and browse the family histories there. You will recognize the origin of many street names in the process.

If you would enjoy helping us open students' eyes to a bygone era, please join us. Contact Sonja Cook at [sonjalocook@gmail.com](mailto:sonjalocook@gmail.com)



## A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The time a volunteer spends at the CHS&M is often just as rewarding to him or her as it is to us. If you have a love for the community, please help show off Cupertino's past and present. Our volunteers help keep our museum open!

If you are available to volunteer for a two-hour shift, **Wednesday through Saturday** between the hours of 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., please contact the Museum at 408-973-1495 or email us at [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net).

## MEMBERSHIP GIFTS

Memberships to the CHS&M provide a base of support for programs, services and general operating costs. We appreciate the support and generosity of new and renewing members. The benefits of being a member of the CHS&M are many:

- Store discounts
- Quarterly newsletter
- Special events invitation
- Access to museum library



## **SAVE THE DATE**

It is time for the Cupertino Historical Society's  
annual fundraiser Barbeque!

# **A Sip of History A TASTE OF THE WEST**

Sunday, June 28, 2015

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

at the historic Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards  
22645 Garrod Road, Saratoga, CA 95070



**BBQ**

**live auctions,**

**tour of the winery**



For further information  
please contact the CHS  
at 408 973 1495 or email:  
cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

**FEBRUARY 2015 thru APRIL 2015**

### **RENEWING MEMBERS**

Jim and Jane Asher  
Diane and Gino Benedetti  
Ellie Bortner  
John and Judith Bruzus  
Patricia and Welko Gasich  
Morris and Louise Hosoda  
Jim and Pat Jackson  
Charles Liggett  
Mary Lou Lyon  
Orrin Mahoney  
Bill Mannion  
Eva Martin-Long  
Bill and Mercedes McCarty  
Paul and Wanda Mikulaco

Kathy Nellis  
Anne Ng  
Keith Peterson  
Inge Roberts  
Pat and Barbara Rogers  
Linda Sanders  
Dolly and Ed Sandoval  
Eno Schmidt  
Clare and Jim Schoenfelder  
George Sousa  
Darryl and Dorothy Stow  
Sean Sullivan  
Don Sun  
Elizabeth Tadman

Steve and Jeannie Ting  
Irvin Webster  
Bill and Judy Wilson

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Annie Ho  
Kinoshita Kim  
Shannon Lee  
Julia Lu  
Janet Trankle  
Lanelle Wilkinson



**MAY 5TH  
SILICON VALLEY  
GIVES!**

Please donate to  
CHS&M during this  
24-hour online  
giving day:  
[http://tinyurl.com/  
Donate-to-CHS](http://tinyurl.com/Donate-to-CHS)



## Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

Quinlan Community Center  
10185 North Stelling Road  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
Telephone: (408)973-1495  
E-mail: [cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cuphistsociety@sbcglobal.net)

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S.POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CUPERTINO, CA  
PERMIT NO.266

### **CHS ANNUAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 6, 2015**

*Refreshments 6:30 p.m. Election of Board 7:00 p.m.*

*Performance 7:10 p.m.*

Quinlan Community Center, **Cupertino Room**,  
10185 N. Stelling Road, Cupertino.



Have some good old fashion fun!  
Come hear the  
**Town Square Harmonizers  
Barbershop Quartet!**  
Enjoy an ice cream social!

Current resident or:

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

### **Museum Hours:**

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

**Admission is FREE.**

### **Annual Meeting,**

Wednesday, May 6, 2015. 5:30 p.m.  
Cupertino Room, QCC

**Holidays: QCC closed**

### **Board Meeting**

Wednesday, June 17, 2015. 5:30 p.m.  
Craft Room, QCC  
Wednesday, July 15, 2015. 5:30 p.m.  
TBA

Monday, May 25, 2015,  
Memorial Day

Friday, July 3, 2015,  
Independence Day

### **SAVE THE DATE**

It is time for the Cupertino Historical Society's  
annual fundraiser Barbeque!

*A Sip of History*



**WINE TASTING ON THE VERANDA**

Sunday, June 28, 2015

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

at the historic Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards  
22645 Garrod Road, Saratoga, CA 95070

[WWW.CUPERTINOHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.CUPERTINOHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG)

Cupertino Historical Society & Museum

## **The Cornerstone**

IN THIS ISSUE

Joe Canarda  
President's Corner  
Teaching History  
The Scholarship Awards  
Traveling Trunk

By Donna Austin  
By Donna Austin  
By William Mannion  
By Sharon Bryan  
By Sonja Cook

