

# Museum of Local History Guild

190 Anza Street, Fremont, CA 94539 - (510) 623-7907

W&F 10-4 & Every 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend 10-4

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

A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization

## *Winter 2014/2015 Newsletter*

### **Board Members**

President – Gil Garza

Treasurer – Lila Bringhurst

Board – Patricia Schaffarczyk

Vice President – *open*

Secretary – Timothy Swenson

Board – Kelsey Camello

### **President's Message**

As we begin to close the year 2014, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the folks who have contributed to the historical community. For the Museum of Local History Guild this has been a very eventful year. I've seen so many contributions of volunteer help and in so many, many different forms. Much of this work goes unseen and gets very little notice. From help with mailings to keeping the Museum building looking its best, donations of services from friends and local businesses, historical exhibit materials, the oral histories, and on and on. I could cover a full page with the generous gifts of our community. Thank you!

The people listed here do an incredible amount of work for the Museum. Patricia Schaffarczyk, Tim Swenson, Sister Loretta Marbach, Dianne Holmes, Gerry Curry, Marjory Begley, Kelsey Camello, Ralph and Carol Bell, Stephanie Willits and Praveena. Many of our volunteers have committed days, weeks, months and years of the work to the Museum. Everyone has busy lives and these folks take a lot of time away from other important things to keep our Museum running. It is an embarrassment of wealth they have given us - thank you.

We also want to thank the Tri-City Ecology Center museum crew with the help of Rudy Anema, Gerry Curry, Caroline Harris, Tom Browne, John Landers and Phil Stob. These people work to keep our Museum grounds attractive and help make us a good neighbor to those around us.

We have received some wonderful and generous grants, gifts and help generating more cash to run our key programs and archiving efforts. We were able to match a \$5,000 grant from The Despeaux Good Works Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation, which generated over \$10,000 for the Regena Dennie Memorial Fund. We have been ambitious this year with school tour projects, oral histories and lots of work on the Higuera Adobe. All of these activities cost a significant amount of money and the help that "you" - the historical community - contributes make it possible. Thank you!

Throughout this year we have significantly benefited from the help of Lila Bringhurst. Lila has contributed to nearly every aspect of Museum operations. From generous help with financing to serving on the Museum board, sourcing, transporting and installing logs for the Adobe school

program, and accessing expert help when we've run into difficult issues, Lila's knowledge, strength and personality have been very effective in growing the Museum and the local historical community - thank you.

The City of Fremont's help in maintaining the Museum also deserves a huge thank you! The Museum of Local History Guild has been working with the City of Fremont to develop a closer and ongoing relationship. The City of Fremont has made available our Museum space without cost, and has helped with the grounds and maintenance of the Galindo-Higuera Adobe. The city has also made the Adobe area more accessible and student friendly. The Museum has been invited to participate with the City to develop space at the California Nursery Historical site so that we can contribute to telling the rich history of the area. Thank you Fremont!

As happy as all these accomplishments make me, I'm tempered by the sadness of Regena Dennie's passing on September 12th, 2014. I think she would be pleased to see the progress and vitality of the Museum. One of Regena's constant refrains was that she "kept the Museum doors open". While this is true, it falls very short of what she did over the many years to support, defend, and advocate for the Museum. Regena always seemed to me like a soldier for the Museum - fighting to keep it moving forward in any way she could. It is a great loss to see her gone. She will be missed and remains an important part of the Museum for me. Regena also highlights for me the importance of our historical legacy and first-hand experiences that only our senior members can give us.

Happy holidays to everyone and thank you!

- Gil Garza

## Collections - Year in Review

We continue to catalogue our collections and we have added many items this year. Highlights include:

The Philip Holmes Collection continues to grow. We have added many files to the Philip Holmes clippings collection. For more than 40 years Mr. Holmes has collected and researched the history of Washington Township, and he has written articles in local newspapers from 1990 through the present. His articles are currently published in Tri-City Voice. His collection of research files, photographs, archival materials and other items are housed at the museum.



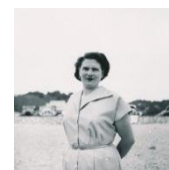
Phil Holmes at work



Butter churn

The Diane Leys Collection includes a butter churn, crank phonograph and a tabletop radio. These items were from the Gomes house and farm. John Gomes, Diane Leys' father, lived his life in the family home that was built by his grandfather, Manuel Silva.

The Regena Dennie Collection includes books and files Regena collected during her years of volunteering at the Museum of Local History and as a member of the Washington Township Historical Society.



Regena Dennie

The BJ Bunting Collection includes many items and photographic images of BJ and his family, which date as far back as the mid 1800s.

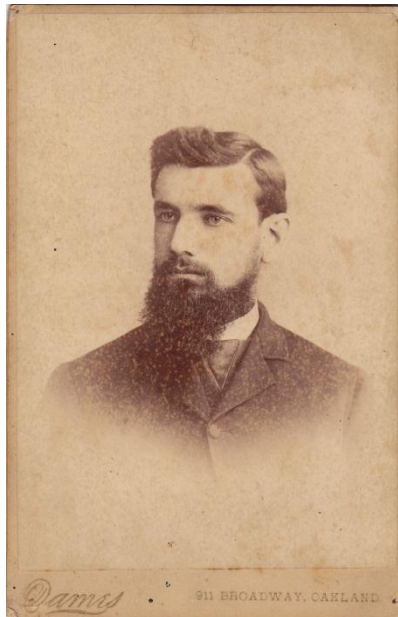


Annie Benbow

The Nelda Erlwein Collection includes original framed portrait photographs of Nelda's family, the Benbow Family. Thomas and Annie Benbow arrived in California in 1859, and Nelda's brother, Wes Hammond, wrote the book, *Remembering my Life in Irvington, California, and Other Memories: 1931-1943*.



The Lila Bringham Collection includes a collection of electrical insulators collected from houses in the area.



Matthew R. Lyle

In November, Kathy Gustafson contacted the Museum. She is the great-granddaughter of Matthew R. Lyle, who built the store in Alvarado that now houses Bronco Billy's Pizza.

Her grandmother, Helen Lyle, was a teacher at Alvarado Grammar School from 1914 to 1917. She married the school principal Thomas Creed in 1917.

Kathy was able to provide the Museum with photographs of Mr. Lyle, Helen, other family members, and a few of the school and its students. These are the only known photographs of the family. Kathy also provided copies of documents relating to Helen and Thomas in regards to the grammar school. One picture shows a number of students exercising in the schoolyard, but the buildings in the background are the most interesting part. It may be the only picture existing that shows the buildings from that time and angle.

Kathy was also able to provide some essential family information so that the Lyle family could be added to the Union City Pioneer Genealogical database.

*We are always looking for treasures you may have tucked away that would add to our collection of local history. Remember us with items, photographs, papers, etc.*

## **Historical Groups Look to Combine into a Single Organization**

In the impressively appointed I.O.O.F Hall #114 the Washington Township Historical Society, Mission Peak Heritage Foundation and the Museum of Local History Guild met on November 30th, 2014. The three organizations discussed the option of combining into a single organization. One of the important values under consideration as an impetus for combining is to be able to speak with one voice as we work with the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City. There are several projects where good city cooperation with a unified group of history organizations could help enhance our ability to share history and improve both visibility and reach in the community.

The meeting was open to the public with everyone having an opportunity to give their input/perspective and to ask questions.

December 24th is the deadline for Museum of Local History member ballots to be received by either postal mail or hand delivery to the Museum. The vote is a yes/no on proceeding with planning the combining of the three organizations.

## Exhibits

Everyone is welcome to visit the museum to view the Alameda County Water District exhibit. It will be removed at the end of January to make way for the Teddy Ruxpin Exhibit, which will be unveiled in February, just in time for the talk by Dr. Pimentel on the same subject.



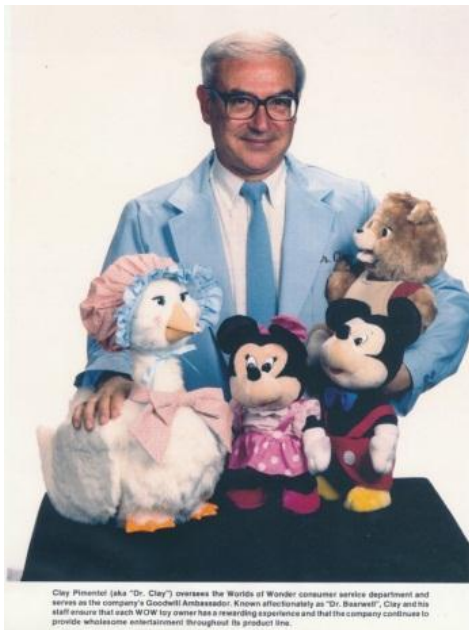
ACWD Exhibit



Teddy Ruxpin Exhibit

## Family Day at the Museum

This is a new event which will run the second Saturday of each scheduled month from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., unless otherwise noted (see calendar in this issue). The event will include an open house at the Museum and a theme of the month with a person or an historical topic highlighted. We will also offer activities for children, including games and crafts. Refreshments will be available. Suggested museum entrance fee is \$2 per person.



### Family Day at the Museum, February 14<sup>th</sup> - Dr. Wellbear

Come to the museum on Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup> when we will have a special program from 10:00 am-1:00 pm. This will also be the opening day of our new exhibit: *Worlds of Wonder: Teddy Ruxpin and his Pals*. Our special guest is Clay Pimentel, also known as Dr. Wellbear.

Dr. Wellbear worked for Worlds of Wonder in customer relations when the company manufactured and sold Teddy Ruxpin and Pals talking stuffed animals. He later opened a

business in which he repaired the inner workings of Teddy and his Pals.

We invite you to come to the museum, visit the exhibits and listen to a short talk, followed by an open forum with Dr. Wellbear. After the talk we'll mosey into the courtyard for *beary\_fun* hands-on activities, including making teddy bear paper dolls, teddy bear Valentine's Day cards and other surprise activities. Refreshments will be available.

We guarantee you will have a *beary* good time! Suggested museum admission is \$2 per person, and will be open that day from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.

## **Family Day at the Museum, March 14<sup>th</sup> - Celebrating National Women's History Month and Women from Washington Township**

You are invited find out about and to help celebrate women in history who lived in Washington Township. Children's activities will also available.

### **Website and Facebook**

Please watch in January for the unveiling of our new website. It is a completely changed format with a new logo, which we are extremely excited to share with the community. Additionally, we are now on Facebook. You can find us under the name *Museum of Local History Guild, Fremont*. Please remember to "like" our page and suggest us to your friends and family! The website address is [www.museumoflocalhistory.org](http://www.museumoflocalhistory.org).



### **Despeaux Good Works Fund**



As mentioned in the President's Message, we are excited to announce the achievement of matching funds for the grant from The Despeaux Good Works Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation. We were able to generate over \$5,000 towards the Regena Dennie Memorial Fund, making our total for the grant \$10,000! Thank you to our many, many donors who made it possible:

Gil Garza	Allen Carl Gardiner	Roberta Tomkinson	Donna Olsen
Kathleen Meuter	John and Rose Barr	Ellen Smith	Mark and Lisa Hirsch
Vermilda Sylva	BJ Bunting	Betty McCoy	Lynette Weems
David Schipul	Lila Bringhurst	Dr. Harry A Avila	Caroline Harris
James R Griffin	Patty Lacy	Steve Burton	Timothy Swenson
Al Minard	J Bruce Hevelin	Rena and David Kiehn	Lisa Garza
Brian and Melanie Martin		Arthur and Joan Kimber	Patricia Schaffarczyk
Brian and Mariselva Barlow		Randy and Anne Power	Joyce Blueford
George C Roeding III and Diana W Roeding		Anonymous in honor of Phil Holmes	

## Regena Dennie Memorial Fund

We continue to accept donations for the Regena Dennie Memorial Fund. The proceeds will be used to fund our educational programs and the cataloguing and archiving of our collections. Thank you for your contributions in honor of Regena.

## Student Tours

We are continuing to advertise and book school tours for the Museum and the Higuera Adobe. If you are interested in helping with these tours or with being a museum greeter please call 510-623-7907. There is always an opportunity somewhere for volunteers.



## Calendar



- 1/14 – Museum of Local History Board Meeting – 7:00 pm at the museum
- 1/26 – Washington Township Historical Society Meeting – 7:15 pm at the museum - topic TBA\*
- 2/11 – Museum of Local History Board Meeting – 7:00 pm at the museum
- 2/14 – Presentation and talk by Dr. Clay Pimentel (Dr. Well-Bear) – 10 am-1 pm at the museum
- 3/11 – Museum of Local History Board Meeting – 7:00 pm at the museum
- 3/14 - Family Day at the Museum - Celebrating National Women's History Month and Women from Washington Township – more information to follow – 10 am – 1 pm\*
- 3/23 – Washington Township Historical Society Meeting – 7:15 pm at the museum - topic TBA\*

*\*Please check our Facebook for calendar updates or call the museum for further information*

## Our Heritage Oral History Project

We have funds set aside for an ongoing oral history project. The first of our interviewees will be with BJ Bunting. We will also be forming a committee to oversee and conduct interviews in the coming year. Early in the year we will be seeking further funding to complete the interviews. Watch our website and Facebook page for updates.



B.J. as a child

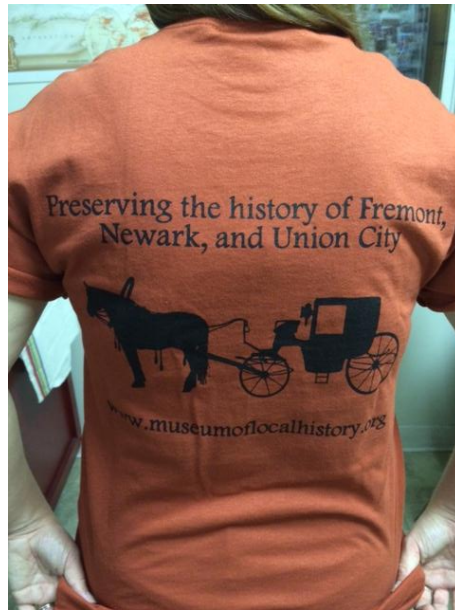
## Membership

We increased our membership four-fold this year, and with your generous membership dues and added donations we were able to expand our programs and will continue this into the new year. To all of our current members we want to extend our warm thanks for your continued support! Welcome also to all of our new and renewed members:

*Janet Barton & Barry Balk    John & Linda Croft    Paul & Berenice Sethy    John Weed*

*DUES ARE DUE:* As the year is ending and 2015 is beginning we encourage you to mail in your membership dues as early as possible. Keep in mind that dues are collected annually. Please use the attached form, which has been included at the bottom of the newsletter for your convenience.

This year we are happy to offer t-shirts to all of our members! If you are interested in obtaining a t-shirt please notate what size on your membership form and include an extra \$15 on top of your dues (\$10 for the t-shirt and \$5 for shipping). The t-shirt will be shipped to the address we have on file for you. T-shirts are rust colored.



*REMINDER: The museum will be closed from December 24th through January 2nd. Enjoy the holidays!*

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**Museum of Local History Guild -- Membership Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Lifetime:	\$1000	Pioneer Patron:	\$500	Pathfinder:	\$100
Trailblazer:	\$50	Settler(family):	\$40	Goldminer (single):	\$35
Senior couple:	\$20	Fremonteer (senior/student):	\$10	Added donation:	\$_____

T-shirt size (circle one, if applicable): M / L / XL

*We are a non-profit organization, established for public benefit. Monetary gifts and membership fees are tax deductible. If you are not already a member, please consider joining the Museum of Local History Guild. Please mail this form along with your payment to 190 Anza St., Fremont, CA 94539.*

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*\*\*\*If you are receiving this newsletter by e-mail we thank you for helping us to decrease our carbon footprint in the new year! If you would still like a paper copy of the newsletter please contact the museum and one will be mailed to you. If you are receiving this newsletter by postal mail we do not have your current e-mail address. If you would like to have the newsletter emailed to you, rather than mailed, please contact the museum with your current e-mail address. Thank you! \*\*\**