

The Branch Line

Newsletter of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley in the Depot

Spring 2021

Water/Ways Exhibit

February 28-April 18, 2021

Water is Life. That is the theme of the new exhibit "Water/Ways" at The Museum of the San Ramon Valley. The exhibit will be at the museum opening on February 28th and closing on April 18th.

It is a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street Program and toured through California by Exhibit Envoy. It is making five stops in the state of California.

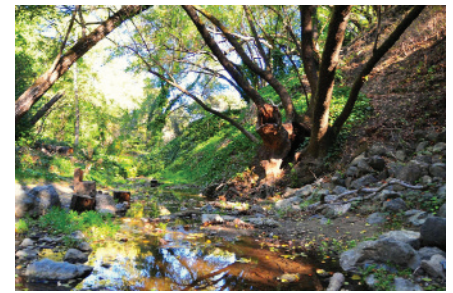
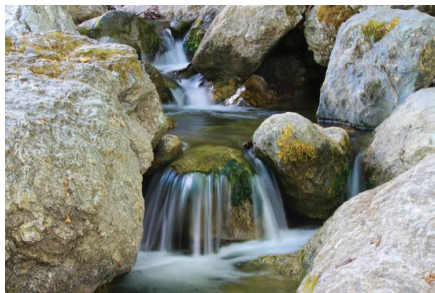
Water is Life. It forms our world and our lives. It allows us to travel; it blocks our paths. It is crucial in determining where we live and work and what we eat and drink. It is an essential biological and natural resource that people struggle to access and control.

Water shapes human culture and our ways of life. It is central to many rituals and ceremonies around the world. It inspires art and music.

Visitors to this attractive and interactive exhibit will explore water in its many aspects: biological, cultural, religious, economic, political, and as a force that shapes the landscape and the lives of all life on earth.

As Chinese philosopher and poet Lao Tzu has written "nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it".

We hope that you visit the museum and this exhibit when the museum reopens. Please check the museum's home page for hours.



Model Trains Running Through the Depot this Holiday Season

The Museum's 2020-21 exhibit was a very cool one, Model Trains Running Through the Depot this Holiday Season. We knew the exhibit might not be able to open and, indeed, two days before the scheduled opening all museums were again closed. Nevertheless, it was a beauty, with our great model trains in the center of the freight room and historic building models set up, all in a winter theme. Christmas memories were featured with Santa sailing over all and Father Christmas at the Danville Oak featured. Part of Carol Anderson's rocking horse collection was shown as well.

(continued on page 2)

Museum Activity

Model Trains Running Through the Depot continued



Many thanks to our joint chairs Bob Miranda and Sonya Borlandelli!

Their committee members were: Carlo Borlandelli, Cheryl Miranda, Donna Hardman, Richard Bower, Ed Best, Ric Mangum, Mike Slattengren, Mark Harrigan, Ross Smith, Rick Mahan, Jan and Arni Habiger, Beverly Lane, Jennifer Prindiville, Carmen Curtis, Carol Anderson, Ginny Ferreira, Earle Schremp, Bill Welch, Bob Burke and Lou Demeter, with staff support from Dan Dunn and Donna Grier.

2020 Museum Exhibits: A Very Unusual Year

While the centennial of women winning the vote nationally was a significant one, no one expected that the Waiting Room exhibit on this event would stay up all year. In fact, it is still in place.

The exhibit featured a lovely 1910 white dress, post cards for and against woman suffrage, and information about the 19th amendment which added 26 million voters to the rolls. Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul were honored for their significant contributions to the amendment's success.

With the help of Donna Grier, Beverly Lane presented twelve programs on the centennial via Zoom to a variety of groups.



Tell Your Story: Life During the Time of COVID-19

We are living through historic times. It is the mission of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley to collect and preserve the history of the Valley. It is fitting that the museum collect the stories of Valley residents and how they have lived during this time. For future generations, the thoughts and experiences of people during COVID-19 will give valuable insights of what it was like to live at this time.

The Museum is creating a collection to document life in the San Ramon Valley during this unique and challenging time. We are inviting you to share your stories, art that you created, photography, poetry, and anything that you wish to share related to living during the pandemic.

The Museum has been hit hard by the COVID restrictions. We have been closed since last March. That has meant no admissions, store sales, program fees, and our fundraising activities have been either cancelled or moved into the virtual realm. Your help is important to us. Please consider a donation to support the Museum and our efforts to preserve the history of the Valley. Please use the "Donate" button on our website.

If you would like to share your COVID story, the questionnaire on the website will help you get started. Please fill out the questionnaire and upload any photos or pages that you need. Stories by minors may be submitted only by the minor's parent or legal guardian.

Thank you for sharing your stories of this uncertain time.

Third Thursday Virtual Program at the Museum

The Museum has been offering free virtual presentations on the third Thursday of the month at 11:30. We have been informed and entertained about the development of highway 680, the Danville Alamo cemetery, the life and library of Adolph Sutro, and the secret history of San Ramon to name a few.

The virtual programs have been well received, with online attendance averaging over 100 persons and recorded programs averaging 314 views per program! All programs are recorded and available to view on the Museum's website.

Upcoming virtual programs look to be just as entertaining and informative.

- February - Sunol Water temple, its past and its very exciting future.
- March - Camp Parks: Its Place in San Ramon and Amador Valley History.
- April - John Muir: California's Most Famous Resident.
- May - a presentation on the Soldiers Memorial Monument in Pleasant Hill.

To attend these free online presentations at 11:30 on the third Thursday of the month, please visit the Events section on MuseumSRV.org or call the Museum at 925 837-3750.



2020 CUMULATIVE GIVING \$100 AND OVER

The Museum would like to thank our generous supporters, especially during these trying times, for their efforts to ensure that the Museum is able to continue to preserve and present the history of the San Ramon Valley.

\$100.00 - \$249.00

Penelope Adams	Helena Flanders	Mrs. Jean Livermore	Steve and Diane Scheck
Barbara Jean Ageno	Spencer Fulweiler & Rena Zurn	Judy B. Lloyd	Judith and Earle Schremp
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\$250.00 - \$499.00

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\$500.00 - \$999.00

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1891 Society (\$1,000.00+)

Supervisor Candace Andersen	Chuck and Laura Ferreira	Beverly Lane	DeWayne and Barbara Ryan
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In Kind Donations

Barry & Wynn Architects	Isaacson & Company	Elizabeth Weiss, Gagen McCoy	Diane Wishart, Sweeney Kovar
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Volunteers Make It Happen

Save the Date! Back to School Under the Stars Gala Saturday, September 18, 2021



The 4th Annual "Back to School Under the Stars" Gala will be held on Saturday, September 18, 2021. At this time we are not able to announce whether it will be a totally virtual Gala or a hybrid Gala done both virtually and on site at the Tassajara One Room School House. Our signature Silent Auction will continue again this year as well as programming to highlight the history of the San Ramon Valley.

We are grateful to our sponsors and supporters who made last year's Gala a success, allowing the Museum to not only continue our current work and programming, but expand our offerings to include monthly virtual educational/historical programs for all. Thanks to your support, we have broadened our services to the residents of the Valley and beyond. We look forward to gathering again on September 18 to celebrate!

WE WANT YOU!!

THE MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY



YOUR MUSEUM NEEDS YOU— BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

- *Meet great people and learn about the rich history of the San Ramon Valley.*
- *Many opportunities available, most with flexible schedules.*
- *Training provided*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Lynne Call; lynne223@yahoo.com

In Memoriam Jeanne Aitken and Gail Faber, Remembered with Gratitude

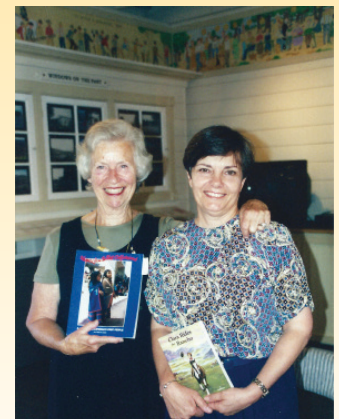
Two long time Museum volunteers in their nineties have passed away recently: Jeanne Aitken and Gail Faber. Both began their service to the Museum and its visitors thirty years ago.



Jeanne Aitken with Joan Kurtz

Jeanne was one of seven Oakland Museum history docents who brought their knowledge, training and enthusiasm to the new Museum of the San Ramon Valley. She was involved in the first exhibits which appeared at the Village Theatre Art Gallery in 1991, providing tours to school children and making suggestions about how to bring the exhibits to life. With her husband Doug, she recruited many new museum volunteers. When the museum opened in 1999 she eagerly took the job of Docent Coordinator. Jeanne scheduled the docents, set up exhibit trainings and promoted field trips, creating a local history docent crew which was second to none. Her intelligence, encouragement and personality endeared her to us all. Our condolences to her family.

Gail was a beloved teacher, an author and an artist. With her Magpie Publications partner, Michele Lasagna, she created two curriculums which are approved by the State for use throughout California schools, *Whispers from the First Californians* and *Whispers Along the Mission Trail*. Magpie Publications also produced three sterling children's books beginning with *Pasquala, the Story of a California Indian girl*. She and Michele helped train docents to teach the Museum's Indian Life Program, beginning in 1991 and she taught the program until 2 years ago. A creative spirit and a woman of faith always smiling, she will be greatly missed.



Gail Faber with Michele Lasagna (circa 2002)



San Ramon Valley Stories

A Tribute to People Who Wrote and Write About the Valley

by Beverly Lane

Our valley has been fortunate to have people who are interested enough in its history to do research and write about it. There are many published books, most available at the Museum store. Two new ones are coming out in 2021: *Historic Tales of Alamo* by Beverly Lane with Sharon Burke and *The Blackhawk Country Club: A Sense of Place, Community and Vision* by Paul Zingg. With these books, there are now histories featuring all parts of the San Ramon Valley.

Here is just a sampler of these history books. Of course, the internet and local web sites provide historical information people can reach from home, offering ease of reading and learning hitherto unknown. Google pages, Ancestry.com and digitalized newspaper sites have transformed historical research and made it available for all. Researchers often go to the Contra Costa County Historical Society's History Center in Martinez, to Cal's Bancroft Library, a phenomenal source of western history and to our museum.

We begin with the people who wrote large, informative Contra Costa County History books. J.P. Munro-Fraser (1881), Smith and Elliott (1879), F. J. Hulaniski (1917) and Edna Fisher Purcell (1940). These are now on line or as books at the Museum research library.

San Ramon Valley and its communities

Alamo Virgie V. Jones in 1975: *Remembering Alamo..and other things along the way* and Beverly Lane with Sharon Burke: *Historic Tales of Alamo*

Danville Irma and Jim Dotson: *Downtown Danville*, Marillyn Cozine: *Danville, A Portrait of 125 Years*, Beverly Lane and Laura Grinstead: *Vintage Danville, 150 Years of Memories*

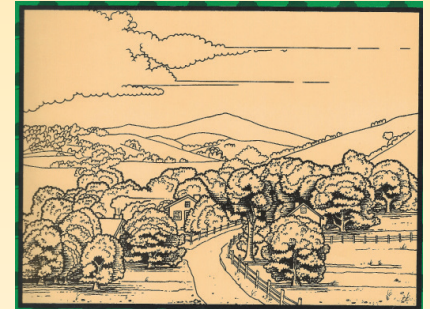
San Ramon Beverly Lane: *San Ramon Chronicles*, Bill Clarkson: *San Ramon History* (manuscript)

San Ramon Valley James D. Smith: *Recollections, Early Life in the San Ramon Valley*, Virgie V. Jones: *Historical Persons & Places...in San Ramon Valley*, Beverly Lane and Ralph Cozine: *Images of America, Alamo, Danville, San Ramon*, Rose Peters Emery: *Footprints on the Soil*, Beverly Lane: *Yesteryear in the San Ramon Valley* (manuscript), Ross Smith: *History of the Danville Grange*, Irma M. Dotson: *San Ramon Branch Line of the Southern Pacific and Danville Branch of the Oakland Antioch & Eastern Railway* (both with much local history)

Mount Diablo The most recent book is *Mount Diablo, A Story of Place and Inspiration* with Stephen Joseph's photographs, edited by Linda Rimac Colberg

Country Clubs

Diablo Country Club: *In Old Diablo, A Social History* by Arnold Blackmur, *Diablo's Legacy* by James C. Stone, *From Country Estates to Country Club, The History of Diablo Country Club* by David Maceskey, *Diablo's Treasures, The Historic Homes and Heritage Oaks of Diablo* by the Diablo Historic Preservation Committee



Diablo Country drawing by Will Ashford

Round Hill Country Club by Janet Besse

The Blackhawk Country Club: A Sense of Place, Community and Vision by Paul Zingg.

Alamo's Mona Lisa Remembered



In 1979 a hillside facing the freeway at Stone Valley Rd. gave Alamo a cachet which no one could have anticipated. Artist Will Ashford planned a "geoglyph" for the hill and produced a Mona Lisa image in the grasses which freeway drivers saw as they drove south. He convinced Hap Magee to keep cattle off the hill, marked off the drawing and enlisted sturdy friends to spread fertilizer at his direction.

Cal graduate student Kim Komenich (later a Pulitzer-prize winning photographer) spent \$400 to hire a helicopter to take a photograph of the artist with Mona Lisa on the hill. His photograph picture appeared in the July 1979 Life magazine's "Just One More" section, for which he was paid \$400. Over coffee at the Alamo Café, Ashford carefully sounded out some California Highway Patrol officers about the drawing. He was concerned that the geoglyph might be distracting drivers. They said the CHP used it to direct officers to incidents "north or south of the Mona Lisa," so he told them he was the artist.

Photograph of Mona Lisa, courtesy of CalTrans.





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The Museum of the San Ramon Valley in the Depot
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MUSEUM HOURS

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RECENT DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM

Wood Ranch items: Photos, Charlotte Wood's poetry	Don Hammond
Museum program DVDs	Wendy Cooper
Bottles from 404 Hartz Ave. back yard	Jeff Mason
Diablo's Treasures, the Heritage Homes and Oaks of Diablo	Dee & Tony Geisler
Marengo family documents (copies)	Carlo & Sonya Borlandelli
Rocky Stone 1985 Interview on DVD	David Rogers
Museum Guild Scrapbook	Colleen Riley

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