



SARATOGA HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

POST OFFICE BOX 172, SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA 95071

November, 2007

Please join us at our
Museum Open House & Tree Lighting Ceremony
5:30 PM Friday, November 23, at Blaney Plaza & Our Museum

President's November Message

They say that we gained an hour when we turned our clocks back a week ago, taking us off Daylight Savings Time - an idea first conceived by Benjamin Franklin. An hour gained? That may be, but I didn't notice. My days have been going by all too quickly, due in part to the many activities going on.

Of course the big event this past month was our grand re-opening of the McWilliams House, officially turning the old cottage into a historic house museum. This much anticipated and well-attended celebration was preceded by so many months (actually several years) of dedicated work by many people, and those efforts have been well rewarded! The weather was great, the people came, and the house showed well. The opportunity to view the house and experience a by-gone era did not go unnoticed by the educational community.

Taking advantage of our new educational program, a group of over twenty children from a local Brownie troop, with parents and leaders, became our first group to participate. A little birdie told me that our educational docents did a fine job with that first group! All of the children were excited and fully engaged in learning about the James McWilliams family, our local history, and eagerly participated in all planned activities. It seems that the adults had as much fun and learned as much as did the children!

A second group has been scheduled which will be a third-grade class of local schoolchildren, and a local adult history group will follow that. I want to thank and congratulate Linda Hagelin, our Education Director, and her team of volunteer education docents for their work in creating and delivering a very fine program.



**County Supervisor Liz Kniss & Chuck Schoppe
at the McWilliams House Opening**

Our End-of-Summer BBQ and Silent Auction held at the Garrod Ranch and Cooper-Garrod Winery was also very successful. The weather was perfect, as was the food and fine wine, and with the great entertainment it couldn't have been better. Thanks must go to our Social Director Nancy Anderson and her committee, to Laurel Perusa for coordinating the Silent Auction, the many contributors to the Silent Auction and buyers, the Cooper and Garrod families, and everyone who turned out to make the day so much fun for everyone!

A recent fun event was our participation in the Village "Witchy Walk-A-Bout". I want to thank our museum docent Betty Jo Watkins

for the added task of welcoming all of the costumed children and parents to the museum to receive their Halloween treats. I happened to be working at the museum that afternoon and I know that Betty Jo was kept very busy.

Speaking of museum docents, I am happy to report that Lynne Gurley, one of our faithful and long-term docents has fully recovered from her recent bout with West Nile Virus. Lynne, we've missed you, and we're happy that we will soon see you back with us at the museum!

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I hope that you will join us as we celebrate the annual Saratoga Village tree lighting and Open House on November 23rd. Ceremonial tree lighting ceremonies will begin at 5:30PM in Blaney Plaza, officiated by Mayor Aileen Kao and members of the City Council, after which the Open House begins, officially marking the beginning of the holiday season in Saratoga Village, a tradition that began fifteen years ago.

Both the Museum and the McWilliams House will be gaily decorated for the occasion and the season by our faithful Museum elves. The Museum building will be brightly lit, guiding visitors toward the music, refreshments, and good holiday cheer! Refreshments will be served as the Saratoga Skillet Lickers, in their unique musical style, serenade us with their own versions of traditional carols. So come on out, bring the kids and enjoy the sing-a-long and the good times, and start your holiday season at the Museum!

As we approach this year's end, I want to thank you, the members of the Saratoga Historical Foundation, our Officers and Board members, all of our treasured docents, volunteers, and other supporters of the Foundation and Museum for the truly great year that we have had.

From all of your SHF Officers and Board members, we wish you and your loved ones a holiday season full of pleasant memories and a happy and healthy year ahead.

--Chuck Schoppe

Historic House Tour December 8

The McWilliams House Committee is sponsoring a Holiday Historical House Tour & Luncheon on December 8th, 2007. The proceeds will go towards completing the restoration and furnishing of the pioneer McWilliams House, which was built in the 1850's and is one of the oldest houses in Saratoga.

The cost for this exclusive event is \$69.00 per person, which includes Luxury Coach Transportation, Luncheon Tea and tours of three historic homes in the Fremont and Hayward area, all beautifully decorated for the holidays.

We will meet at the holiday-decorated McWilliams House

at 8:30 AM for a very quick tour and coffee. The bus will depart at 9:00 AM sharp. We plan to return around 5:00 PM, so it will be a full day activity. Come dressed in vintage or holiday attire and make it a fun day.

There are only 15 spaces left and are now open to the general public. They will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Please contact Marilyn Marchetti at (408) 741-1127 now if you want to reserve a spot. Then send your check for \$69 per person by November 15 (made out to Saratoga Historical Foundation) to SHF House Tour, P.O. Box 454, Saratoga, CA 95070

--Marilyn Marchetti and Peggy Schoppe
Mc Williams Committee Co-Chairs

The McWilliams House Committee Continues to Thank Donors!



**Ann Walton Smith, Marc Benson, Jill Hunter, Lillian Benson,
Rick Walton Smith and Marilyn Marchetti**

The McWilliams House Committee achieved its first milestone with the Grand Re-opening event on Oct. 20, 2007. We thank all the volunteers who made that day such a pleasant one for all our visitors.

Just a couple days before that, we held a private Champagne Reception and Preview Tour for the generous donors and volunteers who directly contributed to the opening of the McWilliams House for the Education Program this fall. We extend our special thanks to additional SHF and community members who responded to our need and generously donated vintage items to our furnishing effort:

Linda Benenati, Allen & Becky Breed, Susan Burgess, Katie Hassett, Marilyn Marchetti, Judy Moring, Barbara Rodriguez, Jenni Taylor, and Gail Wesling.

Lillian Benson, of M. E. Benson Antiques on Big Basin Way, continues to watch for items we need. Since our Grand Re-opening she has donated additional items: an old jar containing old buttons for the sewing vignette, an old jar of marbles for the girls' room and Education Program games, old style flatware for the kitchen table and spoons for the spooner, a vintage iron, and an old school clock (the prettiest I've ever seen!).

We appreciate each of you and your generosity. Your donations continue to be a special part of our restored local treasure – the McWilliams House!

—Peggy Schoppe
McWilliams House Committee Co-Chair

Our Membership sets a record!

Our membership is at all time high of 185 members. We now have more than Los Gatos but less than Los Altos City which has 235 members. We hope to pass them by the end of the year.

I'm happy to greet our newest members for this month of October:

Cynthia Chang
Loren Cook
Elaine Simpson

—Gene Zambetti, *Membership Chair*

McWilliams House Grand Re-Opening October 20th was a Huge Success

Please consider yourself less than fortunate if you missed the October 20th Grand Re-Opening of our lovely little 153 year-old McWilliams House. It will be lauded hereafter in important Saratoga stories as one of the best-attended, sunny Saturday events ever! Random headcounts listed between 400 to 600 citizens and out of town visitors, including many, many engaged youngsters and dignitaries.

Members of the Furnishing Committee, responsible for dressing the old house, in turn dressed up in 1850-1880 styles, as did the teachers on the Education Committee. Sophia C., Girl Scout Seamstress, headed up the costume-creation group, which helped the Education docents prepare for already-scheduled visits by local classes.

Educator Merle Learned set up her vintage rope-making machine. Chuck Schoppe, dressed as a Victorian Gentleman, supplied speeches, ribbon cutting and his lovingly restored Calliope (a huge hit). Doug and Nancy Anderson spread a broad board of refreshments. The most popular were Lyn Johnston and Ann Walton-Smith's homemade cookies. (Now, don't you wish you had been there?)

Peggy Schoppe and Laurel Perusa had pretty costumes with Victorian Millinery touches. Peggy stood out by the street and waved a number of passing motorists in for a visit. Laurel did a great job of advertising the event. A number of folks said they saw the article in the Mercury News. Our local horse-shoer, Steve Wiberg, donated a



A lace-making demonstration at the McWilliams House

display of antique horseshoes, farriers' tools and even a lovely old leather apron just like Mr. James McWilliams' horseshoeing chaps.

Indoors, picture Mrs. McWilliams' parlor with 2 costumed lace-making ladies busily entertaining visitors with their intricate craft. In the tiny old kitchen you found Jenni's (real) bread dough rising in the wood dough bowl, the gorgeous wood/coal cook stove that Chuck refurbished, and old pots and utensils set as though the McWilliams had just stepped out for a moment. The bedrooms featured old rope beds, hatboxes, button shoes and buttonhook, plus kerosene lamps, chamber pots, and a cradle for baby number five next to Mrs. McWilliams bedside. Docents were in each room to point out interesting pieces, share history, and answer questions.

LeAnn Welch Tommerup's kid-fiddlers provided lively tunes and were a big hit. There was a steady flow of revelers celebrating the grand occasion, and many stayed quite some time after the 3:00 closing!

Overall, the event was a smash-success! Many of you who began all of this back in the 1970's when the McWilliams House and Museum building (Swanee Dress Shop) were moved to the present location deserve a round of applause (Willys and Betty Peck, Warren and Sheila Heid, among others). We have many historical treasures worth preserving in Saratoga, and our lovely little McWilliams House may be considered a "crown jewel".

--- Jenni Taylor, *Docent Chair*

What's new in our Museum Store?

Just in time for holiday giving, we have some exciting new items!

Released for the McWilliams House Grand Re-opening, our beautiful hanging McWilliams House brass ornament is \$ 9.50 each or \$ 8.50 for SHF members. Be the first to hang them on your tree, garlands, display case or anywhere around the house. Tie them on your gift packages for a sparkling look. Tuck one in your greeting cards to family and friends.

Our newest book is on *Vintage Fashions*, signed by author Kristina Harris, one of the most widely published experts in the field of antique and vintage fashions: \$19.95 each, \$18.00 for SHF members. It's filled with drawings, color photos, and history on different categories of clothing and accessories, and how to

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properly care for them. It makes a special gift for the woman who loves clothes, history or both.

We have a limited number of reproduction dolls. The first will be cloth patriotic Raggedy Ann and Andy style dolls. She holds a heart pillow and he holds a flag, \$15.00, \$13.50 for SHF members or the Holiday Special \$25.00 for a pair. What a thrill for your daughter or granddaughter to open one for Christmas, Hanukkah, or just as an "I love you" gift!

A new line of old-time wooden toys to arrive soon will appeal to boys and girls alike. We'll have yo-yos, finger tops, and puddle jumpers. What are puddle jumpers? Come by the Museum Store and find out. All the boys and girls on your gift lists will want them. And you'll be helping support the Saratoga Historical Foundation, too!

*---Peggy Schoppe
Museum Store Manager*

The City of Saratoga &
The Saratoga Chamber of Commerce
present



**THE 6TH ANNUAL
TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY
& VILLAGE OPEN HOUSE
NOVEMBER 23, 2007**

Big Basin Way
Saratoga, CA

5:30 p.m.
Village Lighting Ceremony
Blaney Plaza

6:00-9:00 pm
Village Open House
Extended Shopping Hours
Entertainment
Caroling
Horse-drawn Carriage Rides
Children's Petting Zoo

For more information, please call
408.868.1269 or 408.867.0753

www.saratoga.ca.us
www.saratogachamber.org



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