



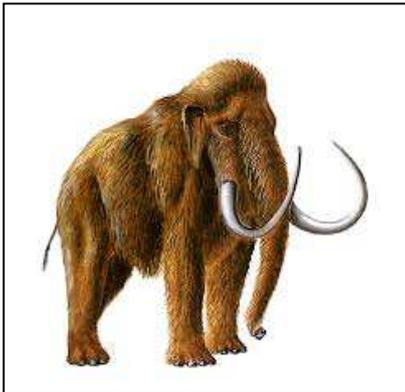
Saratoga Historical Foundation

PO Box 172, Saratoga CA 95071

May 2015

- **Don't Miss These Events-- May 14—Castroville Dinosaur Dig Lecture**
- **Estate Sale Fund-Raiser for August 15**
- **New Exhibit Opens July 10 on the History of Drama Groups in Saratoga**
- **Renew your Membership Today!**

Lecture on Castroville Mammoth and Paleo-Indians Discovery on May 14



Archaeologist Mark Hylkema will share information on May 14 on the Castroville dig where a Columbian Mammoth was discovered and its ramifications. Sponsored by the Saratoga Historical Foundation, the lecture will take

place at the Saratoga Foothill Club (20399 Park Place) at 7:30 PM. In the spring of 2011, the remains of a Columbian Mammoth were archaeologically recovered from the artichoke fields of Castroville. In addition to the partial, but articulated remains of the mammoth, a variety of other Late Pleistocene animals were also recovered. In the hope of finding a link to Paleo Indian activities, a research team involving many different colleges and universities was tasked to investigate. The process of learning about these animals has led to a journey of discovery about the landscape and natural history of the Monterey Bay region at the end of the Great Ice Age, and the arrival of the first Native Americans. This lecture will highlight some of the many insights gained, and will share information about the

**Saratogan Remembers the 1930
Blossom Festival**

recovery of the remains of creatures that were once top of the menu for first people- but have vanished from our



world as if they had never been. The lecture is free to Saratoga Historical Foundation members; \$5.00 for the public. **About the Speaker** Mark Hylkema is the Santa Cruz District Archaeologist for California State Parks, and manages cultural resources within 32 parks in an area ranging from San Francisco to the

Pajaro River. Mark also works on many other projects throughout the state and has 35 years experience in California archaeology, with an emphasis on Native American culture. In addition to State Parks, he is an adjunct professor of Anthropology at Foothill College, and has taught anthropology courses at Santa Clara University, University of California at Santa Cruz, De Anza College, Ohlone College and Cabrillo College. Mark is also the President of the Society for California Archaeology.

Just a Reminder

The lecture takes place:
Date: Thursday, May 14
Time: 6:30, potluck; 7:30 lecture
Place: Saratoga Foothill Club
20399 Park Place in Saratoga.

Saratogan
1930



The festival was held just off of Fruitvale Avenue near the intersection of Saratoga-Los Gatos Road with a stage on one side of the hill and the audience seated across. Called the “Festival Glen” locally, it was located in the Fay-Kuhn tract. A gentle knoll provided the backdrop amidst the nearby blossoming orchards.

Starting in 1928 and through the next six years or so ballets were the chief program feature. Vivian Amet Johnston choreographed the ballet for many years and was followed by Dorice Andreucetti.

People came to the festival by car, train, or the Interurban railway. Special police support were hired to manage the traffic.

Porter had many fond memories of the event. She remembered that Senator James Phelan with his friend tennis champion Helen Wills, dressed in sunny yellow,

Saratoga Historical Foundation Officers

The mission of the Saratoga Historical Foundation is to preserve the unique history of Saratoga for the education and enjoyment of the community.

Executive Committee
 Annette Stransky, President
 Bob Himel, Vice President
 Ron Hagelin, Recording Secretary
 Yuchi Wang, Treasurer

Newsletter
 The Saratoga Historical Foundation newsletter is produced 6X a year. If you have comments or suggestions, e-mail: annette@saratogahistory.com
 The Saratoga History Museum, McWilliams House and schoolhouse are located at 20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road and open from 1-4 PM Friday through Sunday. Call 408-867-4311 to arrange group or docent-led tours. Be sure to visit our gift shop. Visit our website: <http://www.saratogahistory.com>.

Phelan’s opening address to the thousands in attendance noting, “California is the most wonderful place in the world, he declared, “and Saratoga is the most wonderful place in California. That is because it is typical of

everything, from the mountains to the sea, and from the Siskyou to San Diego.”

The ballet choreographed by Vivian Amet Johnston was the opera called the Magic Flute. The story is told in both song and dialog about an enchanted musical instrument luring a peasant maid and prince alike. Young girls were dressed as “weeds, poppies, prune blossoms, flowering quince, butterflies and other symbolic figures dancing the dance of spring.

Porter notes, “I danced in the festival for two years at the age of 11 or 12—it was great fun. I recall wearing a white costume decorated with flowers. It was a wonderful experience. Most of the students were taking dance lessons locally. I remember one student, Nana Ruth Gollner who went on to dance in the San Francisco ballet and later in the Ballet Russe.”

The festival that year also included a 50-piece symphony directed by George T. Matthews. Charles Bulotti, a famous San Francisco tenor, sang two solos as part of the event.

Porter said, “My appearance as a prune blossom was a highlight from my childhood in this Valley of Heart’s Delight. In fact, years later when I lived in San Francisco my friends erupted into gales of laughter when I told them about this, and forever after called me ‘prune blossom’.”

When asked if she was enjoying the 2015 Blossom Festival, which must seem tame after that experience, Porter said, “I AM enjoying it—it is wonderful to see old friends and relish in those times!!”

The Blossom Festival originated in 1900 and provided an opportunity for people to travel through Santa Clara Valley’s blossoming orchards to Saratoga for entertainment. For over 41 years, the Festival flourished and became a big part of Saratoga’s history.

Blossom Festival 2015 Style



Approximately 4000 people attended this year’s Blossom Festival held in the blossoming Heritage

Orchard and nearby Civic Center area.

One person remarked this had become her favorite event—to see all the vintage cars, crafts, and art. A variety of music along with history lectures, book signings by authors and more were also part of the fun. The event was produced by the Saratoga Historical Foundation.

Calendar of Events	
Feb. 13- June 28	Exhibit: Pan-Pacific 100 th Anniversary at the Museum
May 17	Free concert
May 25	Memorial Day Observance
May 30	Docent Refresher Course
July 4	Independence Day, Kevin Moran Park
July 10	New Exhibit at the Museum

Free Band Concert on May 17



The Saratoga Community Band, a California symphonic band, will be delivering toe tapping music with a Concert in the Park on May 17 from 4:00-5:00 PM. The concert is free.

The band, under the direction of Becky Dugan, includes 80+ San Francisco Bay Area residents -- from students to retired professionals -- who join together to have fun through music. The band will be playing in the Wildwood Park in Saratoga. Bring a chair or blanket to stretch out on and enjoy the music.

Memorial Day Observance on May 25

Saratogans are invited to an annual gathering on May 25 to honor veterans and current members of the US



military.

Now in its 87th year, the city's Memorial Day observance will begin at 9:30 AM at the Memorial Arch

in Blaney Plaza and will continue on to Madronia Cemetery.

The observance day is sponsored annually by the Saratoga Foothill Club to recognize those who died while serving their country in the armed forces.

Members of the community will join in the event including Scouts who will decorate the graves; bands; and others.

Free Celebration of Independence Day on July 4

Join in a morning of singing, riveting patriotic band



music, marching in a parade, and good old fashioned fun with the annual free Independence Day celebration. The entertainment starts at 9:30 AM in Kevin Moran Park at 12415 Scully Avenue in Saratoga. Listen to

patriotic music played by Saratoga's own all-volunteer band—the McCartyville band; enjoy a special musical tribute to key historic events; the ringing of the liberty bell; sing along with the children's choir; photo costumed historic figures, and parade around the park. Dogs, bikes, everyone are invited to dress up in red, white and blue!! Popsicles and flags for the young and the young at heart will be available. Don't miss this free, community event.

New Exhibit Opens on July 10

A new exhibit opens July 10 covering the history of dramatic theater in Saratoga. Remember the Theatre in the Glade? Saratoga Drama Group? King Dodo's Playhouse? VITA? Come and find out more about Saratoga's rich cultural roots.

Docent Refresher Course on May 30

A docent refresher course will be held on May 30 from 4-6 PM for museum, education and student docents. The course will be conducted by Museum Docent Director Michael Whalen and Education Docent Director Linda Hagelin. Anyone interested in becoming a docent is encouraged to call 408-867-74311 or e-mail info@saratogahistory.com for more information.

Big Alma and the Panama Pacific International Exposition

Alma de Bretteville Spreckels (1881-1964) was a woman to be reckoned with. In her lifetime she managed to bring the works of Sculptor Auguste Rodin to the US and have the California Palace of the Legion of Honor built to hold them. The six foot woman became an artists' model and posed for the Goddess of Victory statue at the top of the column in Union Square in San Francisco. She lived in the grandest



home in San Francisco. Invented the garage sale and provided funding for two world wars by conducting sales in her mansion. She was able to obtain items for the garage sale from heads of states, presidents, and others.

She married Adolph Spreckels and because he was head of the Spreckels Sugar Company, she often referred to her husband as her "sugar daddy". Having a love of art all of her life, she put her husband's money to work.

Having purchased a number of Rodin's works directly from the artist, she had them displayed at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. In 1921, ground was broken for the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum in Lincoln Park, San Francisco. As Spreckels envisioned it, the building is an almost exact, full-scale replica of the French Pavilion from the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition, which in turn was a three-quarter-scale version of the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur in Paris designed by George Applegarth and H. Guillaume. At the close of the exposition, which was located just a few miles away in the current Marina district, the French government granted Adolph permission to construct a permanent replica of the French Pavilion for Spreckels.

Spreckels continued her charity rummage sales during the Depression, this time expanded to thrift shops, which were eventually given to The Salvation Army to operate. She also continued her devotion to the arts, obtaining more and more works for her museum as well as coordinating and partially funding the development of the Maryhill Museum of Art in Maryhill, Washington, after the death of her friend Samuel Hill.

Spreckels formed a new charity, the San Francisco League for Servicemen, which gathered supplies for the Army and Navy. She even donated her vast Sonoma County ranch to the Army to use as a recreational facility.

Spreckels' last major project was the construction of the San Francisco Maritime Museum. When it opened in

1951, her collection of model ships that had been on display at the 1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition was the main exhibit. However, she had had a feud with museum founding director Karl Kortum and as a result, did not receive much recognition for her role in that museum's establishment.

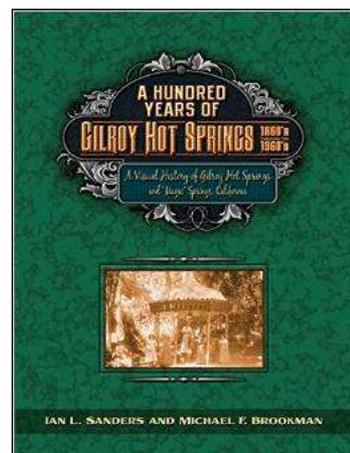
She died at the age of 87 as a recluse. She spent a lifetime seeking acceptance by San Francisco society. Never receiving that acceptance but she left a legacy of art, museums, and good works.



On the Street Where You Live

If you live on Sanborn Road or have been to Sanborn Park, you might wonder

about the origin of the name. It is believed that Kendall Clark Sandborn, an early settler, petitioned for improving a road to Lake Ranch. Families living in the area wanted a road to go from Lake Ranch north to Highway 9. Lake Ranch was the name of the Bernard ranch. They later sold 22 acres to the San Jose Water Company in 1870 to form a reservoir. The road came about but for some reason, the "d" was dropped from Sandborn's name and the road was called Sanborn. The property that belonged to the San Jose Water Company became part of what is now Sanborn Park. Because of the proximity of the road, the park was named Sanborn.



New Gilroy Mineral Springs Book

In "A Hundred Years of Gilroy Hot Springs", authors Ian L. Sanders and Michael F.

Brookman trace the history of what is now a largely forgotten mineral spring, but was once a thriving resort in California's south Santa

Clara Valley. The 122 page book is a pictorial history of the Gilroy springs that will bring back memories to local residents. Copies of the book can be obtained either from the Morgan Hill Historical Society or Amazon.com **Celebrating May Day**

Cars were parked along Saratoga Avenue as far as the eye could see on May 1.



Could it be the Blossom Festival? No, it was the annual May Day celebration held at the break of dawn at Betty Peck's home. The invitation-only celebration draws over 150 friends wearing flower wreaths and big smiles. The event includes singing, a skit ousting out Winter, and brisk maypole dancing. This year's maypole queen was Marina Rainville. Betty as

always dressed in forest green and serenely surveyed the festivities. Afterwards everyone enjoyed fresh strawberries and whip cream—maypole dancing is hard work!



How long has this magical event been taking place? No one really knows but some estimate it has been at least going on for 30 years and all hope it will never end!



May and Teacher Appreciation

The first week of May is Teacher Appreciation Week with May 5 as Teacher Appreciation Day. The impact of a teacher is sometimes difficult to measure.

Earlier this year the Palo Alto Times ran an article by a former student of Betty Peck-- Jay Thorwaldson: "There was something special about Miss Wesson my hands-down favorite teacher in elementary school.

"One special thing was that on pupils' birthdays she would give a token gift. In my case, perhaps in all cases, it was a nickel in a small cardboard box. For some reason that meant a lot more than five cents, and I saved it — it may still be around somewhere.

"Now in her mid-90s and moving slowly but with a quick, sharp memory, Miss Wesson, now Betty Peck, and I ventured back nearly seven decades. We talked of her seven years teaching third grade, then of her being recruited to coach and train all lower-elementary teachers throughout San Mateo County for five years, prior to her marriage.

"And that comes back to "Miss Wesson's gift." Not the nickel but a gift of herself to both her pupils and the many teachers she coached — and to the students they taught over the years.

"I asked what she thought made her such a special teacher, after she said other students have told her she made a real difference in their lives.

"I felt every student was a special gift to me," she said. "That recognition of the individual, the spark of specialness, shined out of her as a young teacher as a brightness, a love of what she was doing and of her students."

Another former student in Palo Alto recently noted this impact: Betty Peck, Saratoga's fabled "Fairy godmother of kindergarten", was a secret and perhaps hermetic lobbying force in the Santa Clara County Supervisors unanimous 5-0 decision to earmark \$8 million to help 100 families with kids form an HOA and ward off their eviction by an evil dwarf of a landlord. Mark Weiss, Peck's student at Foothill Elementary of Saratoga, in 1969-1970, forty-five years prior, used his 66-second address to establish his credentials in urging the vote, to support about 200 kids currently attending either Barron Park, Terman or Gunn, schools with which he is associated.

"I'm from Palo Alto, like Joe Simitian, his Paly to my Gunn, and a couple years behind, but I also attended Foothill school here in Saratoga and had the famous teacher Betty Peck, in a true kindergarten. She even had us to her fantastic spread in the Saratoga Village, with a train set — perhaps the source for my interest in public transit — and she cultivated and sent us home with pollywogs — my environmentalism. Basically she said 'play fair' and 'learn to get along' which evolves into my concern for these my neighbors, Weiss said."

"Comfort-ing" Neighbor

Ruth Comfort Mitchell (1882-1954) grew up in nearby Los Gatos. She was a popular author and playwright writing 16 novels, several books of poetry and many

short stories and magazine articles. She wrote a poem for the dedication of the Sheldon Paterson library (now the BookGoRound building). Her most well-known book was “**Of Human Kindness**”—the rancher’s response to Steinbeck’s book, “**Of Mice and Men**.”

Mitchell married Sanborn Young who served in the California State Senate from 1925-1938. His primary interests were the conservation of wild animals and narcotics control. He and his wife had a pet deer named Lo-lo-mi that walked on a leash.

They had many friends on the peninsula including President Hoover, James D. Phelan, Gertrude Stein, Gertrude Atherton and Fremont Older.

On weekends they used to go to Big Sur on horseback from their house to go camping.



They built Yung See Sam Fong in 1917 high on a hill in Los Gatos. The house is on the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The design of the house was inspired by a Chinese play, *The Sweetmeat Game*, written by Mitchell. One side of the house is all glass and overlooks the valley—providing a stunning panorama from San Francisco to San Jose. Sleeping porches cling on that side of the house.



The inside of the home features Asian carvings, fretwork and brackets. The winding driveway was suppose to deter the bad chi from entering the house. A small statue of the Chinese God of Rice and Plenty still greets visitors at the main gate. A large Buddha near the front door was sculpted by Robert Treat Paine for a Los Gatos pageant. Paine sculpted Leo and Leona, the cats that guard

the Cats Estate.

The home includes a self-sustaining farm where vegetables were grown and chickens raised. A small cold

storage area was carved out of the hill to store the milk. A second storage room called the cheese room was also built and can still be seen. A small structure on the site is where Mitchell used to write.

Preserving Eichler Homes

Joe Eichler (1901-1974) and Eichler Inc. built over 11,000 homes in California beginning in the 1940s.

Eichler homes are from a branch of Modernist architecture that has come to be known as "California Modern", and typically feature glass walls, post-and-beam construction and open floor plans in a style influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Eichler exteriors featured flat and/or low-sloping A-framed roofs, vertical 2" pattern wood siding, and spartan facades with clean geometric lines. One of Eichler's signature concepts was to "Bring the Outside In", achieved via skylights and floor-to-ceiling glass windows looking out on gardens, patios, and pools. The homes had numerous unorthodox and innovative features. Later models introduced the famous Eichler atriums, an entrance foyer designed to advance the concept of integrating outdoor and indoor spaces.



Eichler, unlike most builders at the time, established a non-discrimination policy and offered homes for sale to anyone of

any religion or race. In 1958, he resigned from the National Association of Home Builders when they refused to support a non-discrimination policy.

Saratogan Jerry Ditto (1934-2014) was among the first real estate brokers to focus on Eichler homes and was the author of the first book about Eichler, “**Design for Living: Eichler Homes**,” published in 1995. Ditto helped create what he called “the Eichler phenomenon,” the burst of renewed interest in Eichlers and in modern design that began in the mid-1990s.

Ditto got into the real estate field because of his passion for Eichler homes and modern design. He even created a newsletter in 1992 called *Eichler Insights*. Some of these tract homes are now on the National Register of Historic Places, the Nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Maybe you own an Eichler?

New Class Units for SHF Education Program

"You have a really special program here. We thank you very much and love coming" The assistant teacher continued and said "Linda, you have the best program, we look forward to this every year," reports Education



Director Linda Hagelin on new classes recently put into place and prepared for fifth graders.

The new classes debuted when Hillbrook School's fifth grade class visited recently. In the past the classes have targeted second through third grades.

The new units include beekeeping, carrying and stacking wood, pumping water from a working pump, calligraphy, tasting and learning about herbs for use in medicine and cooking, and pioneer clothing.



The energetic education docents had over 1000 students go through classes this year. The program meets California state requirements for teaching pioneer living. The classes

are conducted in the historic McWilliams house, one-room schoolhouse, museum and the museum patio. The

classes are also offered to youth groups as well as private schools.

Since the classes take place during the



week, most of the education docents are retired. If you have a yen to work with children and enjoy seeing all of these bright smiles, please contact us by sending an e-mail: info@saratogahistory.com or call 408-867-4311.

Training is provided and more docents are always welcome. It is a great way to give back to the community.

Estate Sale—Fundraiser on August 15

The Saratoga Historical Foundation is seeking donations of high end items to sell at an estate sale. The fundraiser for the Foundation is scheduled for August 15 from 9-3 at the Saratoga History Museum (20450 Saratoga-Los Gatos Road).



If you have collectibles, toys, art work, jewelry, vintage items (pre 1960), holiday decorations, antiques, Shabby chic items, ladies accessories (such

as scarves, hats, belts, hand bags), houseware goods, garden accessories, small furniture, or plants—give us a call. You can drop off items during the Museum's normal hours—Friday, Saturday or Sunday from 1-4 PM or up until August 1. Or you can call Bob Himel (415)-860-0827 or email roberthimel@att.net to arrange a pick up time.

Items that are not wanted include bedding, large pieces of furniture, clothing, shoes, books, appliances, exercise equipment, electronics items or luggage.

Your donation will go towards funding the outdoor blacksmith exhibit.

Blacksmith Exhibit- Help Us Grow



The blacksmith exhibit will be located outside and house tools and items normally worked on by a turn-of-the-century blacksmith. A small forge and anvil will also be part of the display with

interactivity and sound effects available Also planned is a nonfunctional outhouse—as part of the turn of the century theme of all the structures in the Saratoga Historical Park. Donations are welcome and tax deductible. Please send your contribution to: Blacksmith Exhibit, Saratoga Historical Foundation, PO Box 172, Saratoga, CA 95071.



Saratoga Historical Foundation
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www.facebook.com/SaratogaHistorical Foundation

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America in Bloom Visit



The Saratoga Historical Park was one of the stops when the America in Bloom judges came to visit on May 4. The judges were given a tour of all

three buildings by SHF President Annette Stransky including the outdoor exhibit. The judges were impressed with the current PPIE exhibit on display, the condition of the McWilliams House and the use of the one-room schoolhouse as an educational program facility. The proposed blacksmith exhibit also received a thumbs up. The landscaping of the park provided by a grant from the Saratoga Horticultural Research Foundation was also an area of interest.

Afterwards a dinner was held on the museum patio. SHF provided a jazz trio from West Valley College and the dinner setup. Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards sponsored the wine which was also appreciated by the judges who had had a long day. Thank you Tina Liddie for providing extra floral arrangements!!

Recent Donations Received



The Saratoga Historical Foundation appreciates donations of items for our collection and archives. Recently Katie Hassett donated a fluter, a specialized kind of "sad iron", used to press the ruffles on linen cuffs and collars and other trim. The iron was heated on a stove and then pressed down on the fabric. We're betting many a burn ensued until experience was gained in using the heavy, cumbersome iron!

Jan Whitlow of the Whitlows store once located on Big Basin Way donated a pricing machine used in the former Saratoga store and a pair of 1960s classic blue jeans. Thank you for these great donations.

New Drinking Fountain!!



Two legged and four legged friends visiting the Saratoga Historical Park can now enjoy a cool drink of water with the new drinking fountain provided by the City of Saratoga.