

Livermore Heritage Guild

Saving Yesterday For Tomorrow

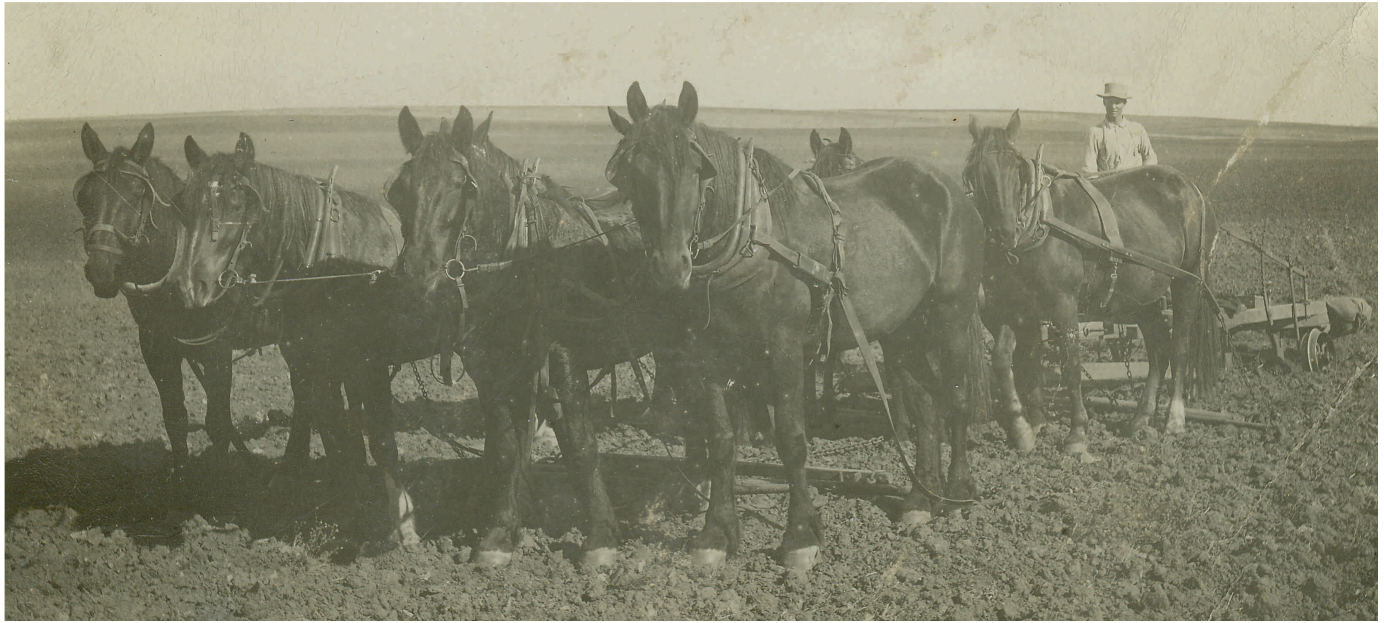


Photo Courtesy of Beaudet/Beyer Family

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Memorial Day: Livermore's World War I "Gold Stars"

In observance of Memorial Day, the LHG newsletter's tribute to Livermore's "Gold Star" veterans continues with World War I. Last November's issue saluted Gold Stars from World War II. The names on the veterans' memorial monument in Carnegie Park next to the History Center inspired this series.

When World War I broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, Livermore was distant from the battles. The U.S. entered the conflict after Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Before all of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Ottoman Empire) signed separate armistices in fall 1918, 116,516 Americans had died out of the 4.73 million in military service. By mid-October 1918, 310 Livermoreans were in military service, with over 200 in the fighting zone in France or Siberia. Three men with Livermore ties lost their lives — one

in combat in France and two from disease while in training or service in Washington state. All three men were buried in the Masonic Cemetery (now Roselawn Memorial Park at 1240 North Livermore Avenue).

In March 1917, even before his April 2nd request to Congress to declare war, President Woodrow Wilson called for the mobilization of regular and militia infantry. The Livermore-based Company "I" of the Fifth Infantry, California National Guard had been involved in the Mexican border campaign of 1916. It re-assembled and was called into service on March 26, 1917, with members arriving in Livermore from as far as Texas. The commissioned officers were First Lt. Henry A. Mehrmann and Second Lt. Maitland R. Henry (later to become *Livermore Herald* publisher).

On April 4, 1917, with America's declaration of war imminent, nearly *Continued on Page 3 ("World War I")*

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A Message From the President

Dear members,

May 16, 2010

My what busy times these next two months are looking to be! Of course we have the Annual Auction on Saturday, May 29th, so I am looking forward to seeing all of you there with your paddles enthusiastically raised as our expert auctioneer Lynn Owens chatters numbers and entreats at lightning speed until that pause and ... SOLD! My pulse is already racing! What more can I clear out so I can justify bringing new goodies home?

But we have quite a month before we even get to the Auction. We have somewhat of a turning point in the remarkable progress that is being made on restoration of our 1920 Seagrave Fire Engine. Some beautiful pieces are already finished, including Fred Deadrick's polished wood steering wheel, a beautifully restored instrument panel and a luxurious front leather seat (done to historical accuracy). We have hundreds of hours of metal repair and preparation by Jim Boehmke to prepare for paint, Chuck McFann spanning wrenches on the engine (getting rather impatient to hear that first cylinder pop), and the whole crew of dedicated characters who share responsibilities from telling stories to leaning hard into stuck bolts. It has been steady transformation from the neglected rusty relic I remember when I first wandered through the garage. This month, however, we are getting the painted



Restored Seagrave headlight shines brightly even when off. See more photos in next newsletter.

frame back from Tri-Valley Auto Body, the folks who have already donated an amazingly generous number of hours painting shiny red panels and parts. Having paint on the frame just gives me the feeling that parts have stopped coming off and will start getting put back on, and that will be exciting to watch. There is still plenty more to do, including applying the gold leaf that was donated (yes!) by Lance Cavaleri of Cavaleri's Jewelry and Sue and John Houghton, and, oh, getting the engine running. But the frame will be bright red and that tells me the Guild will start seeing parts getting closer to the chassis, and that the engine could spark to life sometime this year! (The re-painted chassis will be on display at the Auction.)

You probably recall the highly successful Legacy Home Tour the Guild did two years ago. The tour

was designed as a benefit to raise money to replace our aging History Mobile with a more modern and more capable rolling museum. The History Mobile is always so well received at schools and events, but the current unit is held together with bungee cords and the willpower of Tilli Calhoun and Bill Junk. We recently received a donation of a newer 31-foot motorhome from Loren and Susan Khilstrom and are currently working to make sure it is in excellent running condition before turning to the process of museum conversion. Nancy Mulligan is our History Mobile Committee Chairperson and could really use your help!

And speaking of big projects, you may have noticed that it has been a while since we said much about the Midway school project. As a reminder, the 1870's schoolhouse from the Midway district in eastern Alameda county is resting at the Mulqueeney ranch. The family has donated it to the Guild with the intent that it would be moved to a public location and restored for school and other historic programs. Check out my article on the back cover (page 8) about the school, our next steps and how you can be involved (meeting on June 24th).

While you enjoy this slightly moist spring, remember to wander about our historic town and then stop in at our History Center in the Carnegie building to pick up Anne Homan's and Dick Finn's new book on the Vasco drawings!

Jeff Kaskey

World War I *(Continued from Page 1)*

fifty members of Company I left for San Francisco on a special Sacramento-originated troop train at Livermore's Western Pacific station. Led by a band, the few remaining local Civil War veterans and former members of Company I, all bearing flags, they paraded from the armory to the W.P. station at 10 a.m. Nearly a thousand people gathered for the send-off.

On Sept. 26th, 1917, Company I transferred to Camp Kearny in San Diego County with remaining companies of Calif.'s 5th Infantry. They marched from Fort Mason to the S.P. station at 3rd & Townsend. Many from Livermore went to S.F. to see them off. Ernest Martens and others sent tobacco as a parting gift.

The *S.F. Chronicle* of June 10, 1918 profiled the Bernard Cunningham family of Livermore. Three sons, James, 25, George, 23, and Bernard, 21, had volunteered for duty. The article refers to three stars on a service flag in their home window. Livermore's William Trombley (1892-1948) served in Siberia with the Army's 27th Infantry Division, Co. "M," helping to control the Trans-Siberian Railroad and reclaim U.S. war supplies sent there before the Reds deposed the Czar.

Corporal Peter Beyer, age 26, was the first man with Livermore ties to die in World War I and the only one killed in action. He perished in the first phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive (Battle of the Argonne Forest) in France (the Western Front) on Sept. 27, 1918. Raised on the family's Mines Road ranch, Beyer moved to Tassajara circa 1907. (The front page photo depicts Beyer and a horse team on an unknown ranch.) An early draftee from Contra Costa County, Beyer was a corporal in the U.S. 5th Army Corps, 91st "Wild West" Division, 363rd Infantry Regiment.

W.J. Hosker of Altamont (1892-1943), in the Headquarters company in the 363rd Infantry, witnessed Beyer's death. The *Herald* of Nov. 16, 1918 described Hosker's letter to his mother Mrs. T. Hosker, "[Hosker] was within a few feet of Corporal Peter Beyer, a former Livermore Valley boy, when that portion of the line ran into a German artillery barrage. He was struck in the legs with shrapnel and as he went down he saw Beyer killed with the same missiles, while fighting bravely. He said his own wounds were slight and that he was not even disabled. He considers himself very lucky as the fighting was furious and the

Germans were taking terrific toll of the Americans."

Andrew Beyer (1862-1932) received a telegram bearing news of his son's death on Nov. 4th. The War Department announced his loss among 2,025 Army casualties on Nov. 9th. According to a 2010 e-mail from Paul Beaudet of Colorado (Beyer's great-nephew), Beyer was engaged to be married to Mary Denicke, the Tassajara school teacher. Corp. Beyer's remains eventually were returned to Livermore for burial in the Masonic cemetery. The Veterans of Foreign Wars organization in Livermore was "Corp. Peter Beyer Post No. 1010" when it was chartered on Dec. 17, 1922 (since re-named). Bernard Crohare of Livermore (1894-1960) also was a 363rd Infantry member. Crohare and Hosker returned to San Francisco on April 21, 1919.



Photo Courtesy of Beaudet/Beyer Family

Corp. Peter Beyer (Aug. 8, 1892 - Sept. 27, 1918) was the only Livermore native killed in action in World War I (Meuse-Argonne Offensive, France).

Peter Beyer is among the 77 Contra Costa County World War I fatalities named on the "Doughboy" monument in what is now Pleasant Hill, Calif. When the County first paved the Dublin-Martinez highway (now I-680) in 1921, it dedicated it as a "Memorial Highway" honoring the county's World War I veterans. The "Doughboy" monument was dedicated in 1927 at what then was the turn-off to the Antioch Bridge route to Sacramento (later named Monument Boulevard). Corp. Beyer also is one of five San Ramon Valley area World War I "Gold Stars" whose names are on a monument in Danville. Guild member Betty Beaudet (*nee* Beyer, L.U.H.S., '43) is Corp. Beyer's niece.

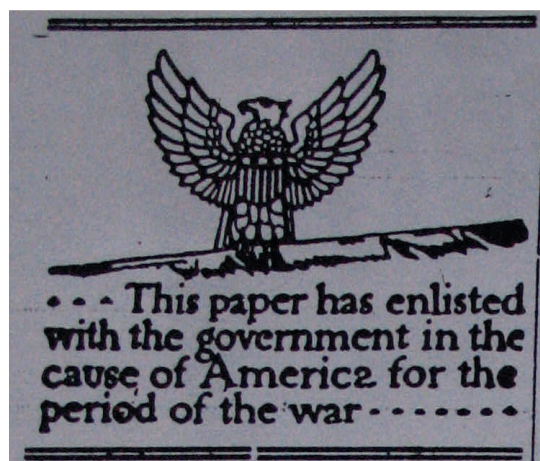
World War I *(Continued from Page 3)*

“FIRST LOCAL BOY TO DIE IN SERVICE PASSES IN CAMP,” the *Herald* reported on its Oct. 12, 1918 front page, unaware of Corp. Beyer’s death two weeks earlier. **Private L.J. "Lawrence" Van Horn, Jr., 23**, died the afternoon of Oct. 10th at Camp Lewis, Wash. (near Tacoma, today Joint Base Lewis-McChord) from an attack of pneumonia. The *Echo* reported that Van Horn had been ill for two weeks. He was sent to Camp Lewis a month earlier with a contingent from San Jose, where he had registered with the draft while temporarily residing there. He was assigned to the second battalion of the 166th Depot Brigade and had just started training when stricken with his fatal illness. His body arrived in Livermore on Oct. 14th under care of Pvt. W.E. Logan of the 166th Depot. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. L.J. "Louis" Van Horn, his infant son Chester, and sister Mrs. Ernest C. (Carrie) Utendorffer, all of Livermore, survived him. (See family in *Vasco's Livermore 1910* book.) Conducted by Rev. Peter Ruf of Asbury M.E. Church, who gave a “brief but intensely patriotic address,” the funeral took place on Oct. 15th at the Utendorffer residence. Interment was at Masonic Cemetery. Seven members of the local home guard were pallbearers (Carl Clarke, Wm. Rees, Peter Higuera, F.W. Tretzel, Fred S. Young, J.M. Beazell, John Begbedier) who also fired the three-volley salute. Edwin Kennedy blew 'Taps' on his cornet.

By early October 1918, the worldwide influenza pandemic had gripped the Valley. In Livermore, schools, churches, the public library and the Bell motion picture theater were closed, eliminating opportunities for community leaders to make four-minute speeches, the primary means through which war charities and fundraising were marketed. James Connolly, 33, was the first of many local fatalities. He died on Oct. 17th after an illness of five days. Doctors and nurses were scarce; Dr. Hal Cope of Pleasanton was himself very ill. The *Herald* on Oct. 26th admonished its readers to wear face masks, “Influenza, unchecked, is deadly as German gas, and must be handled in the same way. An influenza mask is as essential as a gas mask to public safety.”

The Nov. 16th *Herald* said, “The prevalence of the influenza in over a hundred families in the community ... has caused heavy expense in those households. The benefit lodges have been hard hit and the business houses have complained of stagnant business for the six weeks since the disease started its ravages in the community.”

Walter Baxter, 20, died on Nov. 7th at Port Angeles, Wash. of pneumonia following Spanish influenza. His father Arthur received a telegram before the *Echo's* deadline that day. In 2010, Kathy Monds of the Clallam County Historical Society shared the *Port Angeles Evening News* of Nov. 8th: “Walter Baxter, a soldier boy who has been very ill for a couple of weeks at the General Hospital, passed away at six o'clock last evening and his body will be shipped to his people in California.” He had served since July 1918 in the Army Signal Corps' "Spruce Production Division," established to supply aircraft-quality wood to the Allies. Seven siblings, including Creighton Baxter of Livermore and Grant Baxter of Tracy, survived him. His remains arrived in Livermore by train on Nov. 13th. After Rev. Ruf conducted a service at Reimers' funeral parlor, he was buried at the Masonic cemetery. Seven men from the Home Guard (commanded by Carl Clarke with Rees, Higuera, Beazell, Aaron Rasmussen, L.E. Wright and Begbedier) fired the three-volley salute. Robert Livermore blew "Taps."



From the *Livermore Herald*, Oct. 26, 1918.

Lt. Ralph Armstrong of Hayward, an aviator trained as a bombing pilot, died in France. His mother was ill with influenza when the news arrived after October 12th.

The *Echo* sent its paper free to all enlisted men. The *Herald* installed war maps and pictures in its window, changed weekly, “to show geographically the progress of armies and other events of world interest.” It also ran a regular column, “Doings of Our Absent Soldier Boys.” The Oct. 28, 1918 column carried a Sept. 20th letter to editor Arthur Henry from Sgt. Franklin P. Guzman of 81st Company, 6th Machine Gun Battalion, U.S. Marines, who was wounded in both legs. Sgt. Guzman wrote, “I finally got mine over here ... Others have gotten worse than I have, a good many losing their lives ... when Fritz’s big guns send the shells so close you do not know when the one with your number is coming next. Say, that’s made me think of dear old

Livermore many and many a time. Heinie is a bit reckless with his machine gun bullets, too. The way he peppers the spots he thinks you are in is something awful. It is nothing to see a nearby comrade get both legs cut clean off in this way."

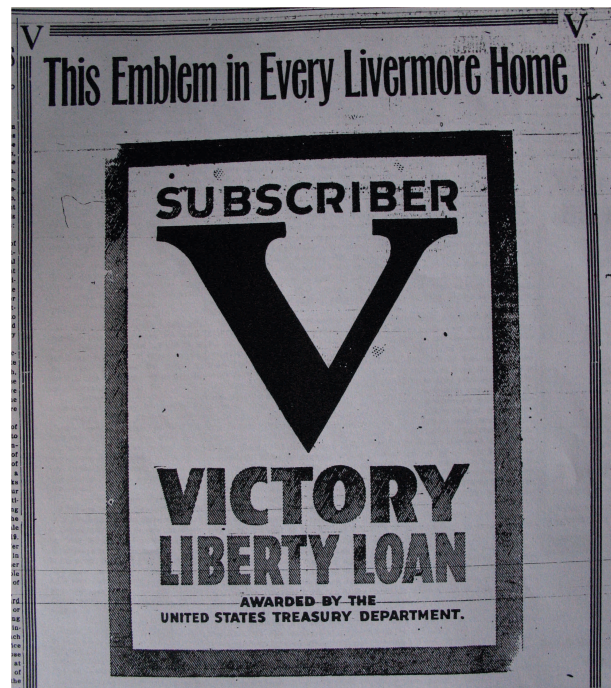
On November 7, 1918, a false report rapidly spread across the country that Germany had agreed to peace terms and that fighting would cease at 2 p.m. Livermore time. Businesses closed for an impromptu community-wide celebration. A drum corps and two Civil War veterans, Jacob Rees and D.E. Lamb, led a parade. The *Herald* wrote, "So many automobiles were soon in line that the pace got too fast for the pedestrians and it became an automobile parade with the machines gaily decorated with the flags of the allies. Later an effigy of the Kaiser was burned in Mill Square. Many people were hysterical with joy over the news that peace was on the way. When the morning papers brought disillusionment or at least a postponement of the announcement the people were keenly disappointed."

Germany signed the armistice with the Allies in a railway carriage in Compiègne Forest, France just after 5 a.m. on Monday, November 11, 1918. The cease-fire took effect at 11 a.m. (the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month). The *Herald* reported, "The demonstration in California started at 1 o'clock Monday morning when the news of the signing of the armistice arrived and it continued without cessation until the same hour Tuesday morning. All business was at a standstill in the meantime ... In the Livermore Valley the celebration did not commence until Monday afternoon but it lasted until late at night. As elsewhere it took on the form of an interminable automobile parade with the flags of the allies as a prominent feature of the decoration. Livermore and Pleasanton joined in a community celebration, the parade visiting both towns. The celebrating of the fake peace of the previous week did not seem to affect the enthusiasm of the people in the least."

Although the fighting had ended, Livermore remained on a war footing well into 1919 as American demobilization and European reconstruction proceeded. The *Herald*, which served a food producing area, reported on Nov. 16, 1918: "The signing of the armistice in no sense ends the war. It only adds to the burden of feeding the world because the road is now open to many people who were formerly beyond reach." Farmers in the Livermore-Amador Valley planned a 1,500-acre

increase in wheat. Most lighting restrictions ("wasteful or extravagant use of light") imposed by the Federal Fuel Administration were relaxed.

Livermore aided the war effort by fulfilling its quotas in the Liberty and Victory Loan Drives. Livermore's allotment for the Fourth Liberty Loan campaign was \$258,700. The community allotments caused sniping between Livermore and neighboring Contra Costa and San Joaquin county communities over subscriptions from farmers in rural areas, especially those who did their "trading" and banking across county lines. A "thermometer" was placed on the downtown flagpole to monitor the community's progress, rising toward the quota mark. At a Sept. 1918 bond rally at Livermore Union High School, "the students sang 'Over There' with such enthusiasm and spirit that it rang throughout the whole building."



From the *Livermore Herald*, early 1919

Intense pressure was placed on local citizens to contribute. E.J. Lawless drug store promoted 1918 bond sales in newspaper ads, "Nothing but the bond drive matters much till October 18th. A booster is a good soldier; a knocker, an enemy; a neutral, nothing. Which are you?" That month a local committee sent letters to citizens requesting contributions and was displeased with some replies. The *Herald* wrote, "These will find that the episode has not closed with the completion of the quota. They will be visited by a special committee of responsible men who will not be bluffed and will tolerate no insults. If these slackers persist in their present course they will be publicly posted as slackers or may have to face charges of sedition if they indulge in the loose talk that has characterized their expressions toward the

Cont'd on page 6

Calendar

SATURDAY, MAY 29TH

**2010 Annual Auction & Dinner,
Duarte Garage, Portola & L:
Doors open/preview at 5:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Auction at 7:00 p.m.**

Dinner tickets \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door, gets you Strizzi's lasagna, bread, salad and dessert. Wine and soda will be available for purchase. Re-painted Seagrave chassis on view.

We fill up at about 100 people, so get down to the Carnegie building and buy those dinner tickets in advance!

SUNDAY, JUNE 13TH

History Lecture, 2:00 p.m., Duarte Garage, Portola & L: Janet Nolan, who lives in Illinois, has written a children's book about Livermore's own Centennial Light Bulb. The hardbound book tells the story of the bulb, in decades. It touches on history and changes in fire stations and trucks. The book, "**The Firehouse Light,**" is beautifully illustrated by Marie Lafrance. Janet has written other fiction and non-fiction books for children.

After all her months of work, Janet is eager to come to Livermore. She wants to see the bulb and meet members of the Light Bulb Committee and the Heritage Guild who have been supportive of her project.

The Garage will open on the Pine Street side at 1:30 p.m. and the talk will begin at 2:00 p.m. Come early and check out the museum aspects of the Garage. We plan to have copies of Janet's book available for purchase and signing. It is a great gift for the children in your life! Light refreshments will be served. There is a suggested \$2.00 donation. *-By Anna Siig*

W.W. I *(Cont'd from Page 5)*

government in the past." The *Herald* published names of bond subscribers and amounts pledged.

Livermore raised its \$125 allotment for the soldiers' and sailors' libraries in Sept. 1917. Livermore's Y.M.C.A. sponsored its drive for war work in Nov. 1917. The Bell Theatre screened special films, including the "Price of Peace," the official U.S. Treasury Dept. film about the entire war, in spring 1919 to support the Victory Loan Committee in meeting Livermore's \$209,925 allotment.

On April 27, 1919, the men of Livermore's "Company I," since absorbed into the 159th Infantry, passed through town on the W.P.R.R. en route to Oakland for a parade with the 363rd Infantry and 347th Field Artillery. The train stopped in Livermore for about a half hour at 10:30 a.m., "which gave Livermore people time to greet their friends and relatives among the boys." Celebrations were held in Oakland at the Defenders Club and Hotel Oakland where an all-you-can-eat turkey banquet took place, described by the *Herald* as "the biggest celebration in the history of the city." The veterans then visited Idora amusement park in north Oakland before taking a special train and ferry to the S.F. Presidio. Many from Livermore traveled to Oakland for the celebration. (The World War I history of Company I/159th Infantry is detailed in the *Herald* of May 3, 1919.) An official "welcome home" celebration was held in Livermore on July 4, 1919.

Three institutions in today's Livermore trace their roots to World War I. The Veterans Administration hos-

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The Livermore Heritage Guild newsletter is published six times per year. Contact the newsletter editor with comments or suggestions for articles.

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pital (1925) was constructed primarily to treat World War I veterans afflicted with tuberculosis. The Veterans Memorial Building (1931) on L Street, originally was designated in honor of World War I servicemen. The Livermore Stockmen's Protective Association sponsored its first Rodeo on July 3-4, 1918 as a wartime fundraiser for the Red Cross. *-By Jason A. Bezis*

Springtime Visit to Sweet/Young Ranch in the Altamont

We met at a bend in the road where a nicely graveled lane leads off to the Sweet ranch. Karen Sweet pointed down North Flynn Road to the Young house, built in 1879 with Gothic high peaked roof, fishscale shingles and Greek window details by John G. Young's father after John and his wife Anna purchased the land from the rail-road. Its indoor plumbing was the height of luxury when dusty travelers would have arrived by horse cart from the train station in Altamont a few miles away down dusty roads. Today the brightly painted house sits close to the road in front of a few old barns and shelters, looking much as it did then. It is hard to imagine what a welcome sight the civilized home must have been after a long trek in blustery cold or baking valley heat. It was at that house that Young's daughter Alice met Darrel's great-grandfather Richard. They married and built a home on the property that we were about to explore. Malvern Sweet (1919-2002), a longtime Guild member, was Darrel's father. (See www.sweetranch.com.)

Today's visit was as much about the wildflowers and wildlife across the Sweet ranch, so we piled back into vehicles and headed up the gravel lane to their ranch.

Let's talk about gravel. On my first visit to the Sweet ranch a week prior, Darrel had given me a new appreciation for what that gray rubble meant to man's ability to settle areas like these hills east of Livermore. The local ground is that ubiquitous East Bay clay that many of us forget as we water our trucked-in topsoil gardens. Clay that bakes hard enough to break a plow in summer and turns to slimy goo at the first real rain of fall. While that



Mule's Ear, dead in his sights. (Photo Dick Finn)



Dick Finn stalks his prey. (Photo Jeff Kaskey)

wet stuff is hard enough to navigate in a 21st century four-wheel drive truck, it would have been nearly impossible with a loaded, 19th-century horse-drawn cart over steep grades. And once the deep ruts harden in the summer, it makes all travel painful and torturous to wooden wheeled wagons. The addition of gravel, however, creates an all-weather road and makes possible casual travel and heavy hauling at a reasonable speed, turning day trips into hours and enabling profitable commerce. Go figure – I came to admire the flowers, but learned the beauty of gravel in creating civilization in our area.

Karen and Darrel Sweet have lived up here now for over 20 years in an area that has now seen seven generations of the Sweet/Young families. They know the look of the grasses and wildflowers, the kildeer call and where the eagles hang in updrafts from the valley, and decided they wanted to share it with the community and do something nice for the Guild at the same time. So for a small donation, ten of us loaded into vehicles and took off across the ranch. Cresting a hill we were overlooking Livermore to the west and hundreds of windmills to the east, then dipped back down and around a hill to stop and crawl among the wildflowers. I am way out of my depth on this topic, but still remember that along with the ubiquitous Poppies, California Buttercups and Lupines, we saw flowers named Scrambled Eggs, Mule's Ear, Blue Dicks, and Blow Wives. The photographers among us captured the art at our feet and we all enjoyed the opportunity to experience the historic property of the Sweet ranch. My great thanks to the Sweets for the opportunity and to their guests for supporting our cause. Given the success of this trip, look for news of future Guild excursions to the ranch. -By Jeff Kaskey

R.S.V.P. for Midway School Information Meeting: June 24th

It has been a long time since we have talked about the Midway school project, so you may be excused for thinking it had slid off our map. Not so! It is time to get interested and involved to save this unique and reasonably complete piece of Livermore's heritage.

Midway school was built in 1873 for the community of ranchers and rail workers east of what had recently been platted as Livermore. The community of Midway was "centered" at the intersection of the Patterson Pass Road with the 1869 Western Pacific Railroad tracks, close to the San Joaquin County line. The county was still mostly rural ranches, so schools were sprinkled around to support children of ranchers and ranch hands and others. Contemporary rural schools in Murray Township included Green, Summit (Altamont), Townsend, May, Inman and Mountain House. After being closed in 1946 because of low attendance, the school has had a utilitarian life as tack storage on the Mulqueeney ranch, decaying, but not significantly changed from its last day of school. The Mulqueeney's have donated the school building to the Heritage Guild to be moved and restored as an educational resource.

That brings us current, and here is where we get active! We have selected a site, drawn up some plans and spoken with the City and LARPD. There is nothing stopping us other than a lack of getting started. I would like to have a meeting of people interested in talking about next steps for the school and how to make this all happen.

I am calling the meeting for **Thursday, June 24th at 7:00 p.m.** I will give an update on the work to date, then we'll discuss where we go from there! Please R.S.V.P. to let me know you are interested and can attend. (I'd also like to know if you are interested, but cannot attend.) When I get a sense of how many people are coming, we'll reserve a room. I would be thrilled to be forced to scramble to find a room to house 100 concerned Guild members and friends!

Please R.S.V.P. your positive intent preferably to my e-mail jkaskey@yahoo.com, but I'll take phone calls (510-816-9542), paper mail (not via snails please) to the Guild office, smoke signals or carrier pigeons. *-By Jeff Kaskey*

