

Do You Remember?



By Anne Homan

Sunol Glen and Mountain House

Inman, Green, Summit, Harris, Townsend, Highland, Vista, Mocho, May, Midway, Arroyo Valle, Murray, Tesla, Rosedale, Vallecitos, La Costa, Sheridan—do any of those names ring a bell? Once upon a time, they used to ring a school bell, at least. These are the names of one-room schools, each the lone school in a rural school district, that were once scattered across Alameda County. The only two survivors are at opposite ends of the county—Sunol Glen and Mountain House.

The Sunol Glen Elementary School District was established about 1885. Julius L. Weilbye designed a two-story frame structure that was in use a year later in the town of Sunol near the Southern Pacific train depot. A photo in Connie DeGrange's book, *A Place Called Sunol*, shows about 30 students and a teacher in front of the two-room school at recess. Since 1926 all the students living in five other outlying school districts abandoned by then, have attended here; the Sunol Glen Unified School District covers 84 square miles.

In 1925 Sunol Glen decided to build a new fireproof school on Main Street. Bids went out in July for the building designed by H. W. Weeks. The school, its stucco currently painted a light pink, consists of two main rooms, a classroom and an auditorium with a raised stage and six beautiful old chandeliers. Since 1982 the Sunol Repertory Theater has used the auditorium to perform a yearly melodrama for the school and the town. Another smaller room with a fireplace fronted with blue and brown tiles was planned as a community meeting room. Today, it is the office of superintendent/principal Diane Everett. However, Diane points out that the school itself still serves as a hub for the community, offering a meeting place for organizations, including Scouts and 4-H.

Through the years, smaller outbuildings including a cafeteria and music room were added, and in 2000 a major building project resulted in a quad created by mission-style classrooms, a library, a science lab and a computer room, with the main school building on the south side. Today about 200 students attend kindergarten through eighth grade. The ten classes offered include individual grades plus three combined groupings of first and second grade, second and third grade, and fifth and sixth grade. Class sizes through third grade average 20, and 25 for the upper grades.

Sunol Glen has open enrollment, and about 70 per cent of the students are transfers from larger districts, mainly Fremont and Pleasanton. The school web site proclaims "a public school with a private school atmosphere." The school district has struggled to maintain its special status. In the 1980s the Pleasanton School District proposed annexation, but with the help of Bill Lockyer and others, Sunol not only kept its own district, but also became a unified school district, which means that some day it may add a high school. After graduation from eighth grade, most students continue their education at a Pleasanton high school.

Mountain House Elementary School District remains closer to its original roots. Class was first held in the Mountain House Inn; proprietor Simon Zimmerman hired schoolteacher Isabella White in 1860. Her pay included room and board. A year later, Zimmerman moved an old saloon building from Mohr's Landing and revamped it into a one-room school about 2 1/2 miles north of his establishment, closer to Byron. A new school was erected in 1873 on property nearby donated by Andrew Haag. In 1924 the current Mountain House School with its stucco exterior was built across the road from Haag's property on Mountain House Road. As with Sunol Glen's design, the interior had two rooms: a classroom and an auditorium. The auditorium was equipped with more than 50

chairs for community gatherings. C.C. Ekenberg of Tracy was the architect.

In 2007 Mountain House School has 41 students and three classes: kindergarten through second, third and fourth, and fifth through eighth. The first named classes are in the main building, one in the original classroom and the other in what was the auditorium. The older students' classroom is in a portable at the back of the school. The school district covers about 30 square miles in a ranching/farming area. It, like Sunol Glen, has open enrollment, and about one-fifth of the students are transfers. Dolores Kuhn is the administrative assistant who runs the three-teacher school for Alameda County. She is a former Mountain House School student; her children attended the school, and her grandchildren as well. She says that this is not an unusual situation. The school web site boasts of this "small school that provides a BIG education." The school also serves as a meeting place for a parents' club and 4H. After graduation from eighth grade, students can choose between attending high schools in Livermore or Tracy.

(Readers can reach me at am3homan@yahoo.com.)



Photo - Doug Jorgensen

FOOTHILL, MOHR CELEBRATE CULTURE:

Students at Foothill High School in Pleasanton are hosting a week of special activities to celebrate the 18th annual Multicultural Week from March 12 through 16. Activities during the week included a cultural fashion show (pictured) with students displaying traditional clothing from their cultures. Other events include displays and demonstrations of cultures, a cultural food fair, and a schoolwide assembly featuring student performances of a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Mohr Elementary School is also holding its Annual Multicultural/Heritage Event this week. The theme is "Celebrations." Around the World at Mohr takes place in the Mohr multipurpose room March 15 during school hours. Parent and staff volunteers will have educational booths to demonstrate an important celebration in over twenty countries including China, India, Bangladesh, Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Zambia, Ghana, The Philippines, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Italy, Ireland, Russia Federation, Turkey, and the USA. On Friday, March 16, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., children from all grades and cultural heritages will perform international dances in "Mohr Celebrates The World" in the multipurpose room. After the performance, volunteers will serve food from around the world.

Volunteers Sought for Humane Society Program

Valley Humane Society is currently seeking volunteers to help with a Hope Hospice program.

Hope Hospice and Valley Humane Society have recently entered into an agreement where Valley Humane Society will help Hope Hospice provide quality end-of-life care for patients in their homes by providing assistance for the family pet. Pet owner's understand that an animal's unconditional love can be soothing in times of stress.

VHS/Hospice volunteers will visit patients in their homes and walk dogs, scoop cat boxes or perform other pet-related services a terminally patient may not be able to provide. This allows the animal to remain in the home to provide comfort and solace during a difficult time.

Valley Humane Society is also seeking volunteers to foster a patient's pet upon their pass-

ing, allowing VHS the time to locate a new home for the animal.

If you are interested in volunteering for this program, please contact Valley Humane Society at 426-8656. New volunteer orientations are held the

third Saturday of every month at VHS from 10AM until 11AM. Background checks will be performed on all new volunteers to this program.

Valley Humane Society is located at 3670 Nevada Street in Pleasanton.

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Wall of Hope at Livermore Post Office

The northern California portion of the Wall of Hope, an exhibit of the Wall of Hope Breast Cancer Survivors' Project®, will be at the U. S. Postal Service, at 220 South Livermore Avenue, Livermore, on Friday, March 16, 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

"We are excited to be partnering with the Wall of Hope breast cancer organization to help raise funds for this terrible disease. The exhibit will also serve to inspire and educate our customers," says Livermore Postmaster Jerry Phillips.

In concert with the event, the U. S. Postal Service will feature its Breast Cancer Research Stamp, a 45-cent, first-class postage stamp that raises funds for breast cancer research. Pink silk roses and handmade crystal ribbons and other boutique items, will be offered for donations by the Wall of Hope. Volunteer hostesses will greet the public at the exhibit, hand out information about cancer, cancer and environmental toxins, and share cancer experiences with the public. The founder and president of the Project, Marilyn Axelrod Burch, will be amongst the volunteers on-site for the two-day event.

"We look forward to showing the Wall of Hope in Livermore

for the first time, and we are committed to educating and supporting the community in regards to environmental toxins and cancer," says Ms. Burch. The Wall of Hope will also have tickets available at the post office for the screening on Friday night, March 23, of Al Gore's movie, "An Inconvenient Truth." The screening will be held in Danville at a private residence. A donation of \$20 a ticket is asked to benefit the organization. The two-hour program will feature a short talk by Ms. Burch about cancer and the environment, and a discussion following the film. Tickets will be available in the post office lobby both days.

The Wall of Hope is launching its national Mile of Survival® effort, and will be taking names of survivors located in other states who may want to add their pictures to the exhibit or act as Event Coordinators in their own towns to help collect pictures for the mile-long display for Washington D.C. The exhibition of the Mile of Survival is projected to take place in the nation's capital sometime in the next two to three years. Each state needs to contribute 750 pictures which will be a 100-foot section of the mile-long exhibit. When complete, the Mile of Survival will be carrying more than 37,500 portraits.

For further information, contact the Wall of Hope at 925.736.7100 or visit www.wallofhope.org.

Police to Present 'Gang Awareness' Workshop

Are gangs a problem in Livermore? California has more gang-related problems than any other state in the nation—with an estimated 300,000 members belonging to more than 6,100 gangs. Nationally, half of all gang-violence victims are innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire. The Livermore Police Department (LPD) attributes increased local gang activity to about 250 documented gang members and associates belonging to three major gangs in two categories.

On Wednesday, March 21, 2007, a free presentation entitled "Gang Awareness" will be offered by the Livermore Citizens' Police Academy Alumni Association (CPAAA) and the Livermore

Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD). It is scheduled to run from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Robert Livermore Community Center, located at 444 East Avenue in Livermore. Additional parking is available on the Loyola Street side of the park.

The seminar will be conducted by members of the Livermore Police Department. They will discuss the warning signs of gang association, school policies regarding gangs, and how to report gang activity. There will be opportunities for questions and answers after the presentation.

The seminar is one of a series presented by the Livermore Police Department and sponsored by the CPAAA and LARPD. A subsequent presentation on Thursday, April 26 at 7:00 p.m. will explore the topic of "Traffic Issues in Livermore." The CPAAA is an organization of members from the community who have graduated from the Citizens Police Academy. For more information, please visit www.livermorepolice.org.



PET OF THE WEEK

My name is Dawn. I'm a 2-3 year old Australian Cattle Dog mix. My "safe" life began on January 7 when VHS picked me up from a shelter with my 8 puppies and put us in a wonderful foster home. As of March 3, all my pups found new homes and now I'm looking for my own place too. I am cautious of new people and don't know many worldly ways, but I'm very loving once I get to know you. I was a wonderful mom, I am interested in things, and TV is something else. I do dearly love my foster parents and know someone out there is just as nice as they have been. For more information, call Valley Humane Society at (925) 426-8656. Valley Humane Society holds mobile pet adoptions for dogs and cats at Pet Extreme in Livermore every Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Hart Student Wins County Spelling Bee

Three of the top four Alameda County school spelling bee winners are from the Tri-Valley.

Finishing first was Neethi Bangalore, a 6th grader from Hart Middle School in Pleasanton. Second place went to Fifth grader Akshayraj Aitha from Fallon Elementary School in Dublin. In third was Alexis Hager, 4th grade, Crocker Highlands Elementary in Oakland, and fourth place went to Nathan Weinstein, a sixth grader from Christensen Middle School in Livermore.

The two top finishers, from Dublin and Pleasanton, will represent Alameda County at the state competition on May 19 at Sonoma State.

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