

STCHS and Library News



From the President's Desk Harriet Codeglia

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

STCHS counts on the membership dues for supporting our operating expenses and allowing us to continue our preservation mission. Due to COVID restrictions (remember when we were asked to stay home for two weeks?) our fundraising events were cancelled. We did hold the annual Labor Day Barbecue in September with excellent participation. We were all ready to have some fun. We remain optimistic that the Wine Tasting Cruise will return this spring.

Although the museum remains open only Friday, Saturday and Sunday, we hope to expand those hours in the vacation season as well. STCHS was founded by volunteers, the collections and displays were gathered and cataloged by volunteers, our docents are volunteers and the board members are volunteers. STCHS would not exist without the continue support of our members and volunteers and we appreciate every one of you.

Please send in your renewal as soon as you are able.

Donations to STCHS were well above prior years. Since our open hours and fund-raising events have been limited, these donations and purchases through Amazon Smile make a difference.

The STCHS website (www.grovelandmuseum.org) and Facebook page are continually updated for your convenience. Our Arcadia book "Groveland and Big Oak Flat" continues to sell well in the museum store. Do you have your copy yet?

We hope to be able to resume our public programs this summer as well. If you have suggestions for speakers, please let me know.

If any of you are interested in becoming more involved, we have need for docents and board members. Give us your time. I can be reached at 415 516 1852 or at hcodeglia@gmail.com.

HERE'S TO A HAPPY AND HEALTHY
NEW YEAR

Honoring Docent Flo Jansen

Kathy Brown - Docent Coordinator
Groveland Gateway Museum

On Friday, January 21st Flo Jansen was honored at the museum.

Flo became a docent early in 2003 and has been on our docent team ever since, making her by far our longest-acting docent. Not only has she given regular docent volunteer hours to our museum all those years but she has baked for bake sales and worked at many special events through all those years. When MOC was seeking docents willing to work weekends after COVID restrictions allowed us to reopen this past fall, Flo was the first to step up. She has generously filled almost every Friday 10-2 shift since then. Normally Flo would have been recognized for her exceptionally lengthy tenure at our annual Docent Appreciation Luncheon in Dec. of 2020 and 2021. COVID made her recognition at those luncheons impossible.

We chose to surprise Flo on the 21st because Mon. Jan. 24 is her 91st birthday. We're sure COVID prevented much of a 90th birthday celebration last year so we thought this would be an appropriate time to acknowledge all she has done for the museum since 2003 and wish her a happy 91st birthday as well.

AmeriCorps Service Projects

In December a message was left in the museum, to which I replied. On December 4, a team of enthusiastic volunteers came to the museum to lend a hand. They picked up fallen branches and leaves from the grounds, filling 14 leaf bags. In addition, they thoroughly vacuumed the museum workshop, tidied up the workshop shelves, cleared fallen debris from the Arastra and walkways and helped put away books after the Book Nook sale. And, they said they wanted to come back again!

And so, on December 18 the team returned, rearranged some furniture in the workshop and went with Harriet and Dave Roberts to the Wells Fargo Building to retrieve some steel shelving and two glass display cases stored there. All was brought back to the museum, the steel shelves were assembled, and even more fallen leaves and twigs cleaned from the still snow-covered walkways.

These delightful young people then thanked us for letting them work with us! AmeriCorp volunteers have been coming to Groveland to work on the Tuolumne River Trust for a few years, and they typically stay at Camp Tuolumne Trails. What a gift!



AmeriCorps team cleaning up.



Cleaned up Arastra

Planning for new exhibit

The museum is planning a new exhibit on the long mining history of southern Tuolumne County. In addition to vintage photos and personal stories, we want to include physical objects that can help bring our mining heritage to life.

We are asking all our friends to help locate artifacts that can be part of our exhibit. Miners' pans, cooking utensils, a tobacco pouch – almost anything that can convey what it was like during the Gold rush. Not too big – it has to fit in a display case. Please contact us (gygmstchs@gmail.com) or 209 962 0300 if you thing you have something that might be a valuable addition to the exhibit. Your item can be on loan; it does not necessarily have to be a permanent donation. We will handle the paperwork to give your family appropriate recognition for your generosity.

STCHS Press Release

By Catherine Santa Maria

I need your HELP! We need a forwarding address for Marie Friar. We have some important news for Marie and the mail that we tried to send Marie has been returned.

If you have a forwarding address for Marie please give me a call at 209-962-7904 or you can email me at casasantamaria@yahoo.com.

Puzzle Exchange

Friends of the Groveland Library is offering a new community service -- a free puzzle exchange. Jigsaw puzzles became very popular during the pandemic. Now you can bring one you have finished and take a new one, free. Come by the Groveland Library and get yours! Lots of safe family fun.



Taking You Back in History Making The Grade

January 2020 Article for Groveland Chamber

Well known to “locals”, and often awe-inspiring and a challenge to travelers, is “The Grade”, the steep 1600 foot ascent connecting Moccasin at the bottom of Priest Hill to Priest Station and the rolling terrain beyond at the top. Priest Grade boasts two different roads - “Old” and “New” - on opposite sides of Grizzly Gulch.

The first track up the hill was a steep trail on the south side. In the 1850s, it was used by early miners and pack animals heading to the gold camps of Big Oak Flat and Garrote (now Groveland). The trail traversed the hill between the current Old Priest Grade and the Hetch Hetchy penstocks that are so visible to today's traveler on the approach to “The Grade” from the west. The miners trail was so rugged that a replacement – the Grizzly Gulch Wagon Road (now the Old Priest Grade) – was built in 1859. Even in 1900 freight wagons could take two days to haul a heavy load from Chinese Camp to Big Oak Flat. Surrounding communities began advocating for an easier and faster road.

The need for a less steep road increased after 1901 when the first loco-mobiles (steam-powered cars) could barely make it to the top and the first gas-driven automobiles were unable to “make the grade”. With a can-do attitude and remarkable community spirit, local citizens banded together to build a new approach to the top without government assistance. In 1911 they surveyed a new route on the north side of the gulch. They donated labor, transport, and supplies and began construction, mostly by hand. They completed a rough 8 foot wide roadbed along most of the new route. Then the private project stopped due to problems in financing and gaining access from some landowners.

In July 1912, Sal Ferretti, Tuolumne County Supervisor from Groveland, convinced other county supervisors to fund the road's completion as a public benefit. In Oct 1912 a county highway was approved, and work resumed on the narrow roadway that had been created by local citizens. By 1914 a 14 foot wide road christened Priests Hill Highway, in honor of community leader Margaret Priest who lobbied hard for the road, was finished.

It was widened in 1924, paved in 1925, and improved as State Highway 120 in succeeding years.

When the completion of the new roadway was assured, Groveland's Tuolumne Prospector newspaper, predicted the demise of Old Priest Grade. It is a prediction which has never come to pass. Both roads, on opposite sides of Grizzly Gulch, remain in use to this day. Local citizens have been calling the improved road on the north side of Grizzly Gulch “New Priest Grade” for over 100 years.

Kathy Brown
Groveland Yosemite Gateway Museum



This granite marker commemorating the 1914 completion of the “Priests Hill Highway” was placed near the bottom of the grade. Its removal date is unknown. The marker made its way back south of the Tuolumne River in October 2020 when the Carlo M. De Ferrari Archives gifted it to the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society. It is on display at the Groveland Museum.

Continues on page 5

News from Friends of the Groveland Library

Friends of the Library Gives Books to Tenaya Students

Virginia Richmond

Just before school closed for the Christmas holiday, Friends of the Groveland Library (FOGL) arrived at our elementary school with several hundred books. Children in grades K-4 were able to select totally free books to take home and keep.

FOGL volunteer Nadine Pedron selected the books and arranged them by grade level. FOGL members Janet Black, Audrey Prouse and Rachel Phillips helped the kids select a “just right” book. It was “pajama day” at school which just added to the fun.

Unfortunately, due to Covid, the FOGL reading enhancement programs such as Bookleggers and Brainy Groveland are still on hiatus. In the meantime, bring your children and grandchildren to the Groveland Library during the week or to the Book Nook Saturday mornings; most kids’ books are just 25 cents!



Third graders Dasha, Charlie and Jojo with their new books.
Chloe Sebold searches for her “just right” book.
Ralph Espino found the book he wanted.



Michelle Teresa Mecredy
Senior Universal Banker
Groveland Branch
NMLS #1704384

18543 Main Street, Groveland, CA 95321
209.436.1800 OFFICE
michelle_mecredy@mechanicsbank.com



Est 1849

(209) 962-1888
Top of Old Priest Grade & Hwy 120
P. O. Box 455 Big Oak Flat, CA 95305
Six generations of family ownership

Photo ©Zach Moshe

Bay Cal

PAINTING & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

209.962.4777 | baycal.com

Matthew Foraker
Sales Area Manager, VP

209.966.5444 office
209.617.0242 cell
209.966.4769 fax
mforaker@premiervalleybank.com
NMLS#1442624

5171 Highway 49 North
P.O. Box 1267
Mariposa, CA 95338



PremierValleyBank.com

Continued from page 3



Groveland area men take a break while digging New Priest Grade in 1913. A few names are missing but identified are Charlie Baird (left, seated who transported the crew to the work site on his stage), Ed Watson, Burley Smith, Roscoe Gray (with pick and shovel), Jake Laveroni, Chester McCarthy, Joe Martinez, Cy Goldsworthy, Bob Nelson, Ed Harper, Sam Blagg

Amazon Smile

Amazon has created a special program – Amazon Smile – that enables its customers to support their favorite charitable organization every time they shop at Amazon. With each eligible purchase Amazon will send 0.5% to the receiving charity. Nearly all products on Amazon are eligible. It costs nothing for a customer to be part of the program.

Customers first need to sign up to use Amazon Smile. They complete this step by visiting smile.amazon.com and signing on with their Amazon credentials. They then select STCHS (Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society) as their receiving organization.

STCHS continues to receive donations through this program and you can participate too!

Donations to STCHS

Donations to STCHS and the Groveland Yosemite Gateway Museum

Our museum would not exist without the donations over the past 40 years of artifacts, historical items, and volunteer time, and the donations of funds to STCHS, including funds for the construction and operation of the museum.

Donations of funds

We are grateful for all donations of funds to STCHS, whether today or a legacy gift as part of your estate plan.

STCHS is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations to STCHS and the Groveland Yosemite Gateway Museum may be deductible for tax purposes. You should consult with your tax advisor.

Donations by check or money order should be payable to "Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society" and should be mailed to STCHS at PO Box 180, Big Oak Flat, CA 65302 or dropped off at the Museum during business hours.

Donations may also be sent to STCHS through PayPal on our website: www.grovelandmuseum.org.



**GROVELAND YOSEMITE
GATEWAY MUSEUM**
Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society

Museum: 18990 Hwy 120 • Groveland, CA
Mailing: PO Box 180, Big Oak Flat, CA 95305
209-962-0300

Email: thegrovelandmuseum@gmail.com
Website: www.grovelandmuseum.org 

Full Story. First Thing.

Now published
Tuesday through Saturday mornings.

THE UNION DEMOCRAT
THE MOTHER LODE'S LEADING INFORMATION SOURCE SINCE 1854

www.uniondemocrat.com

209-532-7151 84 S. Washington St., Sonora

Greetings to our STCHS membership. It is that time of year again to renew your STCHS membership for 2022.

Enclosed in the newsletter is the renewal envelope so you can easily pick the category of your annual membership for STCHS. In addition, if you are looking for a holiday gift, please consider giving a gift membership. The Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society (STCHS) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization.

Your donations and membership make it possible to preserve, record and protect the history of our community. Memberships and donations can be paid with credit card, check or cash in the Museum store or you can simply mail the renewal to our PO Box 180, Big Oak Flat, CA 95305. You can also renew or join by visiting the museum website at www.grovelandmuseum.org.

Thank you for your continued support!

STCHS
PO Box 180
Big Oak Flat, CA 95305