



February 2020



## *From the Archives* **Galt Grammar School**

Galt Grammar School was the first school in Galt and was built in 1879 with money donated by Central Pacific Railroad tycoon Charles Crocker and Galt founder Dr. Obed Harvey. It was located on the southeast corner of 5th and B Streets. Grades one through four were on the first floor and grades five through eight were on the second floor. A bigger Galt Grammar School was built on E Street and the old Galt Grammar School was torn down in 1915 to make way for three homes. When the new school opened, there was a procession of students walking from the old to the new school. Looking at the photograph, adults were less concerned about child safety than they are today.

## **2020** **Fundraisers**

In 2020, we have on the calendar these fundraising events:

**May 9th**

**Ladies' Tea at the Rae**

Chairperson is Joan Werblun

**August 29**

**Drive Down Memory Lane  
Car Show (MAC)**

Chairpersons: James Guthmiller and  
Janis Gray

**August 29**

**Antique and Collectibles Faire  
(MAC)**

Chairpersons Toni Gerling and Sonia  
Tarnasky

**September 26**

**Sip & Snack at the MAC**

Chairperson Janis Gray and committee

All events will need volunteer help. Please let these chair people know if you are willing to give them a hand. As for the car show, we have the participation forms. Those who attended last year will be mailed a form this week. If you know anyone who wants a form, please contact me. Sip & Snack participation forms went out last week and we already have 3 wineries signed up. Changing from the heat of July to September is much more agreeable to vendors.

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We would like to welcome our new members to the Historical Society that joined recently: Mark King, Amber Veselka & Roger Watson. We look forward to meeting you in person!

Dues for the 2020 calendar year have been trickling in. We have made a resolution to be fully paid by March 1. You should receive an email reminder or a notice in the mail for dues to be paid by March 1, 2020. Thank you to these members who have already paid this year: Matt Barsetti, Charles Carver, Myron Dause, EDGE & TA, Peter & Mary Hall, Dave Hamilton, Rev. Maurice O'Brien, Twila Aschieris, Lyle Lagge, Debbie Martinez, Dennis Sartini, Robert Scott and Judy Shipley.

Remember to please contact us for any address, phone or email changes that you have. We need to have updated addresses or it costs us each time a newsletter is returned for incorrect address. But more important is we want to keep everyone updated and informed of all our events and activities!

Contact Rhonda Smith (rhonda@galtsmiths.com) with any concerns about membership.

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## 2020 Historical Society Executive Board

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Harry Souders ~ 2nd Vice President

Liz Haglund ~ Recording Secretary

Toni Gerling ~ Corresponding Secretary

Bobbi Lewis ~ Treasurer

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It seems just like yesterday we were listening to Christmas music and then singing Auld Lang Syne ushering in the New Year. Now we are getting ready for Valentines' Day. Time flies, as they say; but history lasts forever. That is why we have to make the best of each day and hopefully, preserve what we have for those coming after us. I remember when I was in school and we had to study history (which I loved). It seemed like there was so much to learn from the beginnings of man to the birth of our country, through the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, two major world wars, the Vietnam War, etc. The sad part in today's world, so much has come after our beginnings that I am not so sure students are taught all this history. The world they live in changes almost every moment. Heads must spin just to keep up. So where does history get lost to those who have come after us? I cannot do much about the school curriculum, but not only me, but all of us can do something about what we have in our own area. I am so proud of those members who have written books with pictures about our town and area. It can be very difficult researching information in a small rural town. They have to rely on what others have written and what they receive from different family stories. It takes time to piece this all together. We all have information and pictures. Perhaps we think it is not important. It's only my family; who would care. The Galt Area Historical Society cares. Do not think that anything of historical nature is too little. Your piece of the puzzle can solve a story. The picture you may have that seems insignificant to you, could help solve what a building looked like or where it was, or who those people in another picture are.

I know I get on my soapbox from time to time about preserving family history. We have a dedicated Historian in Dan Tarnasky and published authors, including Dan, among us who can tell Galt's story. I do not

want our history lost. If I had it my way, I would have a class on local history in the elementary schools. Probably not going to happen. So all we can do is try to come up with ways to teach the younger citizens of Galt about our history. We try to teach at our Pioneer Days. However, most of that is about early California History. I would like to propose to anyone (or several of you) who want to step up, that we come up with a program to give talks about Galt history and our pioneers. Remember, they are future Galt Historical Society members. It could be held at the Rae and the McFarland on weekends or during summer months. There is a wealth of information that we already have which could excite the younger citizens about our town and area. I bet adults would be interested too. We worry about preserving our history, but if we do not nourish our younger generation about our history, why would they care about it later. We have to give them the information so they want more. We want them to understand why they should preserve our history. Education is the key to a lifelong interest in our town. Our 150th Celebration last year was a great beginning. Many of our citizens were interested. We cannot just have one event and that's it. We have to continue with this education of our history. Please contact me if you have this same passion. Maybe you do not want to do the talks but are interested in setting the program up. Behind the scenes are just as important. I am proposing adding to my committees, an Education Committee. If you are interested in chairing this, please contact me.

Until next month, Happy Valentines' Day.

Janis Barsetti Gray



# Policy and Procedure Review Annual Appeal Letter

## I. Purpose:

The Annual Appeal Letter was originally conceived to invite those who live too far away to attend fund raising events of the Galt Area Historical Society to take an active role in fund raising and offer local members a way to participate in raising funds for the Society even if they are unable to attend fund raising events.

## II. Related Documentation:

Sample Annual Appeal Letter

## III. Procedure:

1. In February of each year, the Corresponding Secretary drafts and mails out an Annual Appeal Letter to all current members of the Galt Area Historical Society. The letter mentions the purpose of the Annual Appeal Letter and how the funds will be used, a brief recap of the year's highlights, and a Donation Form that is attached to the annual appeal letter. Enclosed with the letter is a pre-addressed envelope for easy mailing.
2. The funds received as a result of the Annual Appeal Letter are deposited in the General Fund.

## Gossip from the Galt Gazette February 1902

Call for Vine brandy at the "Brick".



Hiram Chase who has been dangerously ill for the past few weeks is said to be "holding his own".



James Whitaker sold twenty acres of land this week, immediately south of town, to A. Marengo for \$90 per acre.



Grain Growers meeting in Brewster's Hall on Tuesday afternoon at 2 p.m.

# Calendar

Thursday | February 13 | 2pm  
Executive Board Meeting  
550 C Street

Monday | February 24 | 6pm  
General Membership Meeting  
550 C Street

Dates and times are subject to change

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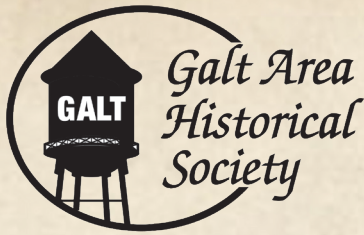
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*The Galt Area Historical Society is a non-profit organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.*

Dear Friend of the Galt Area Historical Society,

Now in existence for over 34 years, the Galt Area Historical Society continues to strive to "Preserve the Irreplaceable". We write to you today to ask for your support of our organization this year with a donation to our annual fundraising campaign.

The Galt Area Historical Society has accomplished a lot in the past 34 years including:

- Restored the Rae House on Oak Street and created a museum filled with artifacts from the area
- Restored the Liberty and Elliott pioneer cemeteries
- Identified and dedicated 22 local historical landmarks
- Created a video on the history of the Galt area (available on DVD)
- Leased the McFarland Living History Ranch (MLHR) and 35 acres of farmland
- Restored the McFarland House and six buildings on the grounds
- In cooperation with the Galt Elementary School District, developed an education visitation program at the McFarland Living History Ranch to complement the School District's California History curriculum (3,000 to 5,000 children from Central Valley schools visit the ranch every year)
- Archived over 10,000 historical photographs
- Compiled 100 family history files
- Recorded 25 oral family histories

The most significant event last year was the donation of the Liberty School House by the Henke Family Trust to the Galt Area Historical Society. The schoolhouse was moved to the Rae Museum grounds and we are anxious to begin the process to restore and furnish the structure back to an original one-room schoolhouse.

Plans are also in works to makeover the Rae House Museum to designate each room with a theme and include more historical photographs and information on Galt's history.

The Historical Society relies upon the generous financial support of private individuals to help us preserve and care for Galt's historical legacy. We hope that you will help the Historical Society continue its important work by supporting the Annual Appeal this year at any level that is right for you.

A donor envelope is included for your convenience. Remember that every donation makes a difference, regardless of size.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

*Toni Gerling*

Toni Gerling  
Corresponding Secretary



# The Fire of 1932

Galt, like most towns and cities across America, has endured its share of devastating fires in its early history. In 1932, a fire burned the same block for the third time in fifty years.

On Sunday, August 14, 1932, a fire broke out in the Spanish Ballroom that spread through the brick block on the northeast corner of 4th and C Streets. Carrie Alderman, the wife of the owner, heard a crackling noise and alerted the fire department. Before firefighters could bring the fire under control, it had spread through the Galt Hotel, Wallace Sawyer's apartments, Evan's Mercantile, Louis Alderman's Department Store, and Leo Ludwig's Barbershop. Doc Osler's Drugstore on 4th Street received water, and smoke damage and the awning over Alderman's Miniature Golf Course was a total loss.

The delay in response time was because Galt used volunteers in its fire department. Firefighters had to come from neighborhoods throughout the town and get the equipment from Angus Quenell's Garage. A call went out to get help from Elk Grove, Thornton, and Lodi. Other volunteers helped remove stock from the bottom floors of stores and the hotel.

There was a rumor that the fire started from a lit cigarette left in the Ballroom after a dance but the Ballroom manager, James Sparks, said he checked everything and even turned the power off. He thought the cause was arson. There was a broken window in one of the restrooms close to where the fire started. When firefighters first arrived, they said they saw black smoke like that from oil or gas.

The owner of the brick corner block, Louis Alderman, vowed to rebuild immediately after the clean-up. In April of 1933, a new \$22,000 Spanish Ballroom had reopened. Val Valente's thirteen-piece orchestra played for a crowd on the Ballrooms 10,000 ft dance floor (30 extra feet were added). All the bottom floor shops had been repaired but Sawyer's upstairs apartments were never replaced.

A June 9, 1933 edition of the Sacramento Bee had an article with Alderman's proposal for a new \$35,000 three-story hotel with thirty-eight air-cooled and steam-heated rooms. The bottom floor would have a fully decorated lobby and six new stores. It never happened. Louis Alderman passed away two weeks later from a heart attack while visiting San Francisco.



Historian





# Save THE Date

The 1st Annual Antique & Collectibles Faire to benefit the Galt Area Historical Society will be held on August 29 at McFarland Living History Ranch. The Faire will be held in conjunction with the annual Drive Down Memory Lane Old Car Show.

Vendors will sell only antiques and collectibles that are 20 years or older. No new items will be sold at the event. We will allow items that are repurposed as long as the materials used are vintage and not new items made to look old.

The Historical Society will be cleaning out the Rae Museum basement and the McFarland Ranch in the coming months and will have a booth at the Faire to sell unused/unwanted items.

As you do your spring cleaning this year, keep the Historical Society in mind and consider donating your unwanted vintage items or you may prefer to rent a booth and sell them yourself.

By combining the Antique & Collectibles Faire with the Old Car Show we expect a great turnout this year.

Toni Gerling and Sonia Tarnasky are co-chairing the Antique Faire and James Guthmiller and Janis Barsetti-Gray are co-chairing the Old Car Show. More information regarding the Antique Faire will be published in next month's newsletter



## The Rae House is Getting a Makeover

The Galt Area Historical Society was founded in 1987 with the goal of "Preserving the Irreplaceable." In that same year, we acquired the Rae House with the intention of restoring her to the former Victorian glory of the 1860s. The City Council offered the developers a waiver of park fees if they would give the City the Rae House and 3/4 of an acre of land surrounding it. The developers agreed, and the City Council then deeded the house and land to the Galt Area Historical Society with the stipulation that the Rae family house be restored, and a museum created and maintained. Since that time, members and other kind donors have filled the house with artifacts and kept it open for all to see. After 30 years, it's time for a makeover.

Why are we doing this? While walking through the "museum," you'll notice that there is no method of teaching local history. Local school kids would walk out, not knowing anymore Galt area history than when they walked in. There are several artifacts and photos that are unlabeled. Half of the artifacts have nothing to do with local history, but they were kindly donated to help fill a space. It's an eclectic mix of different items where someone couldn't decide whether it's a furnished Victorian home or a museum. It has always been called the Rae House Museum and now the time has come to turn the Rae House into a first-class local "museum."

Over the next 6 to 8 months, we will be slowly transforming each room with new displays and artifacts that tell the history of Galt, Herald, Thornton, Liberty, Clay Station, Elliott, Arno, Colony, and Hicksville. Some items will be placed in a new display while others are permanently removed. If you have donated any items on display, please contact us regarding their historic significance. If they meet the new standards, we will put them on display. If they will not be kept and you would like the items back, we will arrange for pick up. Otherwise, we will sell unused artifacts for funds to create more displays and purchase more Galt area historical artifacts. At the same time, if you have something relating to Galt area history and would like us to display it, bring it to the Rae House or arrange for pick up.

We know there are those people that don't like to see change, but the Rae House displays, in their present state, have become outdated and without a method of teaching history. We hope everyone understands our goal.

## Louise's Walk Down Memory Lane

When I was about 6 years old a medicine show came to Galt and pitched a tent on the corner of 6th and B Street. There were many empty lots around then. My Dad, Mom, Grandma, and Carl, my brother went to see it. The tent wasn't so large, I realize now, but then it seemed spacious. Several lanterns hung on the sides. We sat on wooden benches.

The man began his spiel warning people of sickness and holding up bottles of "guaranteed to cure" medicine. I was intrigued with the "tape worm". Oh how dangerous that was!

If anyone accidentally swallowed one, it would live in their stomach and eat one's food up before the person could digest it, all the while growing larger.

Then the wonder liniment- a red color- used to ease lameness on man or horse. Oh yes, if you had "catarph" in your chest it would cure it. Those wonderful "medicines".

We smile of peoples ignorance of yesteryears. We are so much wiser today-Ha! Ha!

In 1952 "HADACOL" put in an appearance, the wonder medicine. Most of us laughed but enough took it seriously. We had a joke "HADACOL" they had to call it something. It soon disappeared.

A few years later another fellow sold medicine - he had a business on 4th street and shipped cases out of Galt. He made money until he was told by authorities he had to get out of California.

There was also that tonic just for ladies who thought the stork was waiting too long to pay a visit - Lydia Pinkham's "A Baby in Every Bottle". Another medicine I can't recall its name Little Liver Pills.

Sienna Tea - it really WORKED or I should perhaps say "it would really send you to the nearest bathroom.



# Bits & Pieces

## Apologies

In last newsletter I listed all the authors among our members and I left off some. I mentioned Dan Tarnasky, Mike Greer, and Durlyn Anema. I left off Charlotte Cameron who wrote a wonderful book on Thornton, Jacqueline Hanson, whose book "Matilda's Story: The California Years," is a biographical novel of her family and history of our area, and Toni Gerling who just completed, "Great American Little Town," a timeline from 1869-2019 of Galt's history. All of their books are for sale. You can contact me or the authors to purchase their books. This is pretty phenomenal to have this many authors within our ranks. We are proud of all of you, and thank you for keeping our story alive for future generations.

## Key Assignments

We will be rekeying and changing some locks. If you are someone who has keys, please let me or Lyle know so that we can replace your keys. Each person will be required to sign for new keys.

## Kite Day

Kite Day will be held April 5th at the McFarland Living History Ranch. It has not been determined who the Chairperson will be, but I know there will be lots to do and fun for the kids, young and old. If you want to help, you can contact me and I will pass it along. One thing we know for sure is that Donna and Nancy and family will be cooking!

## Liberty Schoolhouse Update

As you pass by the Rae House Museum, you still see the Liberty Schoolhouse on cribs. That will change soon. I was approached by a local contractor/concrete person who wants to put in the foundation as a donation; and another member who will be donating the cement. The city has met with the contractor and the city has been very supportive and helpful in this effort. Next newsletter, when the project is done, we will identify and give these two individuals the thanks deserved.

## Thanks for the Help

Last week we started cleaning the basement at the Rae House. Thanks to Dan Tarnasky, Bobbi Lewis, Lyle Lagge, LaVonne Riddlespurger, Sue Dean, Darlene Aguilar, and Joan Werblun, we were able to clean one side, organize the Christmas decorations, and put aside lots for the yard sale. There is still more work to do in the basement and in the upstairs west room. If you are able to give some time on a Tuesday or Thursday, please let me know.

## Grant Writer Progress

This is a slow process as we stated previously. The grants we are going for to start and complete the event center at the McFarland are large grants. In order to find and secure those grants from donors, they want much information about us. Dan Tarnasky has spearheaded this and it just takes time. For the time being, the grant writer will concentrate on smaller donations that do not require this information until we put together all information needed. A project this size will take a lot of money. It is not just putting up a building. We have many rules and regulations we have to follow. Unfortunately, those can be costly. So keep tuned.

## TOT Grant

Previously, we mentioned that we had applied for the TOT grant from Sacramento County to help with major repairs at the Rae Museum. Unfortunately, we were not successful in getting this grant. We will have to look elsewhere for donations or fundraisers to help with this project.

## Donations and Help from Some Friends

Thanks to Walmart for their \$1000 donation to go toward the renovation of the Liberty Schoolhouse, Dave Olson for allowing some funds from the Lawrence Fund be used to fix the dilapidated picnic benches in the Pioneer Day area for the kids, Jim Spaans for donating some great cabinets for use for displays at the Rae Museum, and to F&M Bank for their donation for a section of the fence at the McFarland House. We sincerely appreciate all that you have done.

## Annual Appeal Letter

Those of you who came to our last membership meeting, got a copy of the annual appeal letter. There will be one included in this newsletter also. It is this time of year that we ask not only our members, but community members, and businesses to help with whatever amount of donations they can. This helps us with our projects and general maintenance. Many people are not able to help at events or work on projects. This is your way to contribute and support what we do. I want to thank everyone in advance.

## Membership Drive

Another area we need to work on is getting more new members. We all have friends and family who might be interested in joining our society. There is an application on our website to be filled out and mailed in. Interested people can also go to Pay Pal

from our website and pay dues. New members will be contacted by our Membership Chair Person, Rhonda Smith with information. Your enthusiasm about the Galt Historical Society can be contagious and pique someone's interest.

## General Membership Meetings

It has been nice when everyone brings either an appetizer or a dessert to our general meetings. It is greatly appreciated by everyone who attends. Let's keep it going each month. However, in March, June and October, we will have catered dinners. More will come about the cost and what the food will be. Thanks again.

## Some Help from the Students and Scouts

The Liberty Ranch FFA will be giving Lyle and his crew some help at the McFarland Ranch on February 13. They not only receive community service credit, but it is a big help to us also. On Feb 14, the Girl Scouts will be helping Rita and her docent staff clean and organize the McFarland House and the bunk house. Rita would like to have the bunk house as part of a self-tour when the house is open. Thanks to both organizations for your continued help to the Galt Area Historical Society. I am also working with the Boy Scouts on two potential Eagle Scout projects: One at the Rae Museum and one at the MAC. More will come about this.

## Elk Grove Historical Society

Dan Tarnasky and I have been asked by the Elk Grove Historical Society to give a talk and presentation in April. We are looking forward to sharing all we do in Galt with our neighbor. The Elk Grove HS also has a planned event, 2nd Annual Early California Days on March 28 and 29 from 9 am to 5 pm. We can have a booth with our brochures and we can sell books and our items. If anyone is interested in manning the booth, let me know. Authors, you should have book signings and sell your books. We would need a pretty good group of you so everyone gets relief during the day. Please let me know so I can give them the info.

## In Memory

We are sad to report that one of our Life Members, Aleck Dambacher has passed away. We want his family to know that their friends at the Galt Area Historical Society have Aleck in our thoughts. Aleck was the brother of the late Ellen Dambacher, a past Secretary on our Board.



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