



## ECHS welcomes new board members

The El Cajon Historical Society's Board of Directors has three new members for 2014.

■ Gloria Chadwick is our new Recording Secretary replacing Carla Nowak, who has faithfully served as secretary for 14 years. Carla will continue to serve on the board as a member at large.

■ Sharon Jarboe has volunteered to serve as Corresponding Secretary, a position that has been vacant for the past three years.

■ Lou Toth, a longtime ECHS member, was elected to a three-year term ending December 31, 2016.

ECHS also has a new President for 2014. Carroll Rice was elected President and former President Fran Hill is now Vice President.

All ECHS members are invited to attend Board meetings which are held

at 9:30 a.m. on the third Saturday of the month at the Knox House. If you'd like more information, please call (619) 444-3800 and leave a message and a Board member will get back to you as soon as possible.

## Bring grandmother's brooch to January's quarterly meeting

Do you have a piece of jewelry from years past that you've always wondered what it's worth? Bring it to our next quarterly meeting January 23rd to find out.

Using the items that you bring in as examples, Erik Johannesen, owner of Antiques of San Diego, will explain how antiques are appraised and give you an estimate of their value. He has 30 years of experience in estate and collectible costume jewelry and displays at Vignettes and Newport Avenue Antiques in Ocean Beach. He is a past appraiser for the Del Mar Antique Show.



ERIK JOHANNESSEN

The quarterly meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, January 23, at the El Cajon Sizzler, 1030 Fletcher Parkway (next to Smart & Final).

Seating is limited for this informative presentation on jewelry and antiques so get those reservations in early. See the back page of this newsletter for lunch information and the meeting reservation form. The deadline for reservations is Monday, January 20.

## It's time for most members to renew

It's a new year and time for many ECHS members to send in their dues. Most memberships are on a calendar year basis.

We greatly appreciate members who pay their dues in early January. By doing so, the costly expense of sending out a special billing is eliminated and the subsequent cost savings enables ECHS to make better use of its resources.

Membership dues for 2014 remain \$12 for Individual, \$20 Family, \$30 Organization, \$40 Business, and \$500 Enhances Life. (Life members never need to renew.)

Thank you for your support of ECHS.



photo by Pat Yeakey

*Outgoing ECHS President Fran Hill, left, chats with Jean Landis, whose presentation captivated the audience at ECHS's annual meeting in October. As a Women's Airforce Service Pilot (WASP), Jean shuffled fighter planes during World War II.*



## President's Message

# A New Year bring new goals

by G. Carroll Rice

Over the years the El Cajon Historical Society has had some notable Presidents, men and women who have overseen its growth and expansion. As I assume this office, it is my desire to follow their footsteps and leave it to my successors, still improving and still expanding in acquisitions and accurate historical data.

With the coming of the New Year, it's time to set new goals for the Historical Society. Some suggestions and goals seem to roll over, year-after-year, but there should be no feeling of discouragement. As long as we recognize our needs – such as expanded research and storage facilities – we will be in a position to grasp any opportunity that the times and the City may offer.

Personally, my short-term goals for the Society include recognition of the Hispanic elements that have influenced El Cajon history, and a concerted effort to recruit their descendents into our organization. There are personal narratives to be found and blank spots in our history that need to be filled.

A second goal is to establish greater contact with the local high schools and community colleges. Surely there are students that are looking for opportunities for community service and the use of our archival material in the preparation of classwork papers. One cautionary note –

we must be prepared to use student volunteers wisely and in a way that encourages interest.

Board members, too, have been offering suggestions ranging from providing appropriate music in the museum during tours, occasional recreational events for members, and the appointment of a Board member as a Meeting and Program Coordinator. Please keep the suggestions coming in for discussion; they are vital to a healthy Society.

We have a dedicated Board of Directors displaying a remarkable array of talents and abilities, and I shall rely upon them, as well as the membership, to keep the Society providing ever-expanding, on-going service to the community.

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## New photos available to view thanks to volunteers' efforts

The ECHS photo archives have long held over 550 transparencies (35 mm slides) which were taken and donated by former ECHS president Russ Stockwell. Unfortunately, these pictures were seldom seen because they are difficult to view without a slide projector or viewer. Now, thanks to the tireless efforts of members Michelle Braun and Mike Kaszuba, all of the transparencies have been digitally scanned and saved in JPEG format to the ECHS office computer.

Several of these photos will appear in the updated, soon to be published *Valley of Opportunity* being assembled by Eldonna Lay, and two appear in this newsletter on page 4. This collection, shot mainly in the 1970s and 80s, includes pictures of past Mother Goose parades, old buildings, El Cajon personalities and aerial photos of the valley. Members may feel free to stop by the museum to view or purchase copies of Russ's great contribution.

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## Essays provide 'good read'

It's a new year and a new group of local third-grade students will be writing their essays on El Cajon history.

This spring, volunteers will be needed to read these essays. Each volunteer will be given a group of about 10 essays from which to select the top three. The selected three essays from each group will advance to the finals.

To volunteer, please contact ECHS at 619-444-3800 or by e-mail at [echs0997@att.net](mailto:echs0997@att.net).



*Vandalism has become a problem at the Knox House; recently someone broke the windows on the back porch. When you're in the area, please keep an eye out for any suspicious activity at the museum.*

# Christmas guest drops by museum

by Fran Hill



Once upon a time the good members of El Cajon Historical Society got together to decorate the Knox House Museum for the holidays. The ladies and gentlemen busily placed the grape vines on the stairway banister representing the many acres of grape vineyards of early El Cajon. The little artificial holiday tree was set up with wax candles on



*Board member Becky Taylor adjusts an ornament on the Knox House tree.*

the limbs and little candy molds hanging from the tree. Small toys were also added. The base of the tree was covered with a handmade “crazy quilt”.

Everyone was having such a good time helping with the decorating when they heard unusual noises coming from the kitchen or back porch area. What could it be? As the noise continued, one brave soul went in search of the mysterious sounds. After a thorough search, the culprit was discovered.

We have a El Cajon Valley Growers Field Box setting beside the iron kitchen stove that is used a “wood box”. A live fat little mouse had made a comfy home in the box. Now we know Illa Knox would never approve of a mouse living in her kitchen so two gentlemen carefully carried mouse, box, and all outside. The little mouse was encouraged to leave the box and, after some coaxing, ran for the closest palm tree. It seems the little mouse had a fine collection of pecans, walnuts and hazelnuts stored in his box

The moral to this story is “Don’t leave any food in the Museum.”

**Additional note:** And the good members of the El Cajon Historical Society lived quietly (and mouse-free) ever after.

## New at the Knox

by Mike Kaszuba, Curator

### GROUP OF SMALLS, CIRCA 1900

Donated by: Nancy Lewis

The museum recently accepted a donation of small items from Nancy Lewis, widely-known within the El Cajon body politic as a dedicated city enthusiast and community volunteer. That role has earned her nominations in 2005 and 2013 for the Chamber of Commerce’s “Citizen of the Year” award.

Pictured is a pretty 8" porcelain transferware candy dish marked M Z Austria, manufactured by Moritz Zdekauer in Alt-Rohrlau, Austria between 1884-1909 (present day Stara Role, Czech Republic).

Continuing clockwise are a 4½" Bavarian porcelain hatpin holder with gilt floral decoration; a dollhouse miniature tri-leg candlestand table complete with candle; and a porcelain ring holder. Two 3" gilt fleur-de-lis decorated butter pats follow, and a trio of hand-blown milk glass eggs used to induce hens to lay at certain times or in particular farmyard locations. Closing out the group is a miniature wooden spinning wheel.

Thank you Nancy for this little cluster of nostalgia! The hatpin holder would look quite attractive in a secure display with a collection of hatpins donated by the Society’s membership. Anyone feel like starting us off?





# 'No Such Thing as Ghosts'...or is there?

As part of its involvement with the Downtown Art Walks, the Knox House participated with the downtown galleries and businesses in "HauntFest on Main" that was held October 25.

Master storyteller Carroll Rice (left photo) captivated the audience with his new short story *No Such Thing as Ghosts*. Written especially for this event, the tale recounts what happens when the new school principal buys the local haunted house and tries to live there.

This year's HauntFest attracted costumed partygoers of all ages including (right photo) this young pumpkin Sophia and her mother, Teresa Hall Bresler, a past president of ECHS.



## Photos show artistic side of machinery

by Eldonna Lay

Some 15 years ago, the people owning the "Olive Hills Mansion" off Greenfield and its companion building which contained old olive oil pressing machinery donated the equipment to the El Cajon Historical Society. With no place to store it, Russ Stockwell, then the Society's archivist, prevailed upon the generosity of Jerry Hollingsworth and Steve Horrell, owners of Singing Hills Golf Club, to store the pieces there.

Years later when the course was in the process of being sold to Viejas, local developer Daryl Priest allowed the Society to store several of the pieces on his empty property at Main and Magnolia. The rest were donated to the Motor Transport Museum in Campo.



These are photos of some of that pressing and processing equipment while under the trees at Singing Hills. And when Priest was ready to start building on that downtown corner during the renovation of downtown, Society members tried to find support for using the equipment as historic pieces of public art. Unable to do so, they sent those pieces, too, to the Motor Transport Museum.



photos by Russ Stockwell

Regretful ever since, Society art lovers wanted to share with readers and East County golfers the exquisite pieces of engineering that illustrated how often the need for functional equipment has inspired the formation of immensely pleasing art.

# Winning essays capture historic El Cajon

Students from 14 elementary schools submitted essays covering various aspects of El Cajon's history in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Third Grade Essay Contest. The winning essays are being included in this newsletter as space permits. So far, five essays have been published in the last two Heritages. The following is another winning essay.



## Originality

### HISTORY OF THE EL CAJON CEMETERY

by Makenzie Ayres, Vista Grande School

You may find it odd that a 9 year old girl would choose to write her report on the history of a cemetery, but my mom, my grandma, and I find cemeteries very interesting. The El Cajon Cemetery is located on Dehesa Road at the end of Vista Grande. I cannot tell you how many times my family has driven by the cemetery. It is a place that holds so much history for El Cajon and the early settlers; if only the headstones could talk.

The cemetery was established in 1903 when 6 plus acres was purchased from D.S. Bascom and John G. Burgess for \$225.00. Even before the land officially became a cemetery, early settlers of El Cajon were using the land for burials. The oldest headstone is for John and Mariah Hall. Mrs. Hall died in 1889, but there are unmarked graves on the land from before then.

When the cemetery first opened, lots sold for \$8.00. During the Depression, they sold for \$1.00. Today, single lots sale (sic) for \$2,400.00.

In August 1971, over 80 years after the first burial in the cemetery, Officers for the Cuyamaca Parlor of the Sons of the Golden West held an official dedication ceremony of the land.

In July 1998, there was talk of the cemetery closing due to road exten-

sions and no more usable land for burial sites. In the end, El Cajon was able to purchase more land. Today, the cemetery has 20 acres, and it currently holds about 10,000 burial sites with room for approximately 10,000 more.

The cemetery is divided into several different sections. The sections are officially named with the letters of the alphabet. Even if a section is named with a letter, for example section "C", it doesn't mean that the staff uses that official name. Section "C", sadly, is also known as "Baby Land". It is a very sad portion of the cemetery.

The original cemetery is known as "Vanilla Drive", and it is at the edge of the cemetery. They do not run water in this section. It is where all of the oldest graves are located and where we found the headstone for John and Mariah Hall.

When I went to the cemetery for research, I met a very nice man by the name of Tim Sperry. He is the caretaker. I was able to ask him a lot of questions about the cemetery, and I am happy to say, I was able to give him a lot of information that he did not know as well. Mr. Sperry did mention, the cemetery is a private, non-profit, cemetery run by a board of directors.

The cemetery is very peaceful. While I was there walking around with my mom and sister, we noticed several people that came out to care for the graves of their loved ones. They would sit in chairs or bring blankets to sit on beneath the beautiful Pepper trees and Magnolia trees. All around you could hear that tinkling of wind chimes that people have left in the trees. I even saw a dream catcher or two.

In our walk around the cemetery, I noticed the most recent plot marker dated January 24, 2013. For me, seeing the oldest headstone and the most recent headstone during my tour was fitting.

The El Cajon cemetery may not be large by some cemetery standards, with only 2-3 burials per week, but it is rich with the history of our city.

I hope you enjoyed my research on the El Cajon Cemetery as much as I did.

## Editor's Note

The winning essays are posted at [www.elcajonhistory.org](http://www.elcajonhistory.org) (under Education). Since the third graders conduct their own research, ECHS cannot guarantee that all of the information is historically correct.

# 70 years of orchard heating in El Cajon

by G. Carroll Rice

I had yet to arrive in El Cajon on the morning of February 1, 1929, but I've been told that it had been a very cold night. It was cold enough that the men and women who tended the citrus groves had started lighting the orchard heaters, most often called 'smudge pots,' shortly after midnight. Though tired and covered with black soot, they were already preparing for a day of hard labor in anticipation of another frigid night. My father was among them, working in spite of a toothache, while my mother had been painfully occupied with another kind of long labor at Mercy Hospital in San Diego. I, unaware that the next 23 years of my life would be influenced by orange groves, was struggling to breathe and adapt my body to a new environment.



the clouds are spread becomes visible. The coldest temperatures occur at the lowest levels (the western portion, largely occupied by the city), and rise with each foot of altitude until reaching the hopefully-named 'frost free' hillsides. The object of orchard heating, of course, is to raise or stabilize the temperature between the ground and the ceiling and to provide a safe environment for the ripening fruit.

During the 1920's, many theorists believed that *smoke* from any heat source in the orchards would lower the ceiling, reduce the volume of air to be heated, and surround the trees with its warm moisture and heat. This was a flawed assumption, but for many years, the growers, relying on the information available, made no attempt to eliminate the heavy 'smudge' produced by coke or oil heaters. In any case, it was incumbent on the grower to use any available method to provide heat for his grove, ignoring unhealthy respiratory consequences.\*

That cold February night was just one of many that impacted the citrus industry in the El Cajon Valley throughout its 70 year history (1890 – 1960). Generally speaking, its climate was a little cool for growing lemons on a large scale, but the Valley offered a variety of rich soils, mild weather, and usually sufficient water to support orange and grapefruit groves. Against those assets, however, one would have to list pocket gophers who feasted on tree roots, the uncontrollable water-stealing, deep-rooted Bermuda grass that was beginning to spread across the Valley, and the dozen or so cold winter nights each year that could damage new growth and destroy immature fruit. Measures against the threats of freezing temperatures included the most spectacular aspect of citrus fruit production . . . orchard heating.

While some thrifty growers still burned stacks of old tires, the majority turned to the coke-burning units ('smudge pots') as they became available and later invested in the more efficient oil-fueled heaters. All methods of orchard heating are costly, not only in the price of the fuel consumed, but in the wages paid the manpower required for the operation and maintenance of the system. I recall that as a general figure it was estimated that fuel oil costs accumulated at a minimum of \$50-per-hour (1939 dollars!) for every ten acres heated. The grower, his family, and perhaps some hired labor (usually at about 50 cents/hour) would be involved in each firing of the heaters. During World War II, the Citrus Association arranged for Mexican laborers ('Braceros') to work in the groves and often made them available for heater firing and maintenance.

The protection of crops against frost damage is complicated – a combination of intuition, luck, art, and science. In the case of citrus fruits, the variable factors of ambient temperatures, internal fruit temperature, the percentage of sugars in the fruit juices, the length of time the fruit will be exposed to low temperatures, and the means available to protect trees and fruit are crucial. For example, the rule of thumb was that maturing oranges could withstand a temperature of 26°F (3.3° C) for four hours without significant damage. This was an excellent observation, but the questions remained: *when* should that four hours begin and how *mature* is the fruit? (See article by Milman Youngjohn, *Heritage*, July 2013.)

(continued on page 7)

The groves are gone now, but it's easy to see that the lands suitable for citrus production in the El Cajon Valley lie at elevations ranging from the valley floor into the surrounding foothills, which can be classified as 'micro-climate' zones. These zones are observable when the valley is foggy or smoky, and the temperature layer or 'ceiling' upon which

\* Orchard heaters and 'smudge pots' are not the same thing. The orchard heater is designed to deliver heat to the air around the trees until the temperature is stabilized or increased. A 'smudge pot' is designed to create a blanket of thick smoke as might be used to hide a military target. There are some authorities who still believe that the smoke is beneficial, as indicated by this explanation offered by Wikipedia: "The burning oil creates some heat, but more importantly, a lot of smoke, particulates, carbon dioxide, and water vapor. This artificial smog forms a 'blanket' that blocks infrared light, thereby preventing radiative cooling that would otherwise cause or worsen frost."



As to the heaters, the early commercial models were simple sheet metal stacks with a grate and air adjustment holes in the bottom. The fuel of choice was a mixture of coke briquettes and oil-soaked wood, purchased in large burlap bags, which was lighted from a hand-held torch containing a mixture of oil and gasoline. In theory, the lighted heater could be shut down by placing a cap on the stack. This was seldom effective and a lighted heater was usually allowed to burn itself out. The next day, the large bags of the coke/wood mixture were stacked on sleds or stone-boats which were dragged by tractor or horses through the groves and stopped to fill each heater in preparation for the next night. (Heaters were placed between the rows of trees only during the winter. The rest of the year, they were stored next to the trees.)

The introduction of the oil heaters in the late 1920's and 30's offered more efficient use of fuel and a greater production of heat. The unit consisted of a reservoir (bowl) at its base, a base lid (incorporating a fill orifice with a cap that included the damper or adjustable air vent) that supported the combustion chamber and stack. A hinged cap on the stack protected the heater from weather and assisted in the heater shutdown. The use of a liquid fuel required the grower to supply a large storage tank and a tank wagon to deliver the fuel to the heaters. (The modern 'return stack' feature was not a part of the heater at that time.)

The long-spouted torch, similar to those used by fire departments setting backfires, was fueled with a mixture of half gasoline and half fuel oil. A lighted wick was maintained at the burning end, and a firescreen installed inside the spout prevented the flame from reaching the fuel. During the heater lighting, a splash of burning torch fuel was splattered on the open fill cap of the reservoir and the rising heat drew the flame into the heater and ignited the heater oil and its vapors.

In the late 40's, some growers experimented with "wind machines" including my cousin Earl Vanatta at his property on Third Street. In theory, the 20-foot high windmill could draw the warmer air down from the higher elevations and blow it across the orchard. This works if the higher air is

truly warmer. If it is as cold, or colder, than the ground temperature, the propeller draws that frigid air down into the orchard. Furthermore, the breeze from the machine shakes the super-cooled fruit and may cause its juices to freeze and break down the cell structure from the inside.

Many growers also invested in a device popularly called a 'frost alarm.' Essentially a thermostat, it was installed on a post in the orchard and connected by wires to a power source and a bell by wires. When the temperature dropped to its "set-point", the bell rang to indicate that a firing of heaters might be necessary.

Beyond the purchase of heaters, fuel, and thermometers, the individual growers prepared to protect their groves by studying bulletins from Federal, State and County agencies. Severe freezing conditions during 1913, 1922, and January 1937 (the worst on record) emphasized the importance of the citrus industry and the necessity for its support. The establishment of County Farm Advisors by the University of California Cooperative Extension added extensive research and published much-needed advice.

Pressure on elected representatives led to the authorization of the U. S. Weather Bureau to establish guidelines to prevent frost damage to crops. In 1917 the Bureau appointed Floyd D. Young, a hydrologist, to lead the research and establish a warning service. They had found the ideal man for the project, and with the support of grower associations, the Fruit Frost Warning Service was in operation by 1922. Reporting and recording stations were set up in the agricultural areas all over California, the data coordinated by Weather Bureau personnel and transmitted to the Service headquarters in Pomona.

Anyone who remembers those days will recall the voice of Floyd D. Young, himself, listing the agricultural communities and forecasting the expected overnight temperatures. Warnings, first broadcast on KNX and later on KFI; were presented at 8 p.m. from November 15 through February 15. Listening to those nightly frost warnings assumed some aspects of a religious ritual for citrus growers. When Mr. Young retired in 1956 after 39 years of service, he must have taken great satisfaction in the service he had founded.

Locally, the Weather Bureau employee, a Mr. Harmon in the 1940's, had an office in the El Cajon Valley Citrus Association packing house and set up field stations throughout the Valley. One was on Pepper Drive and another was installed on my parents' property near Third and Lexington. The station consisted of a white hutch-like structure and contained a Thermograph (a device that graphically recorded the temperatures for a week), a low-temperature recording thermometer, and in at least one station, a sling psychrometer (to determine relative humidity). The weather man would drop by once a day to take readings, and then return to his office to draw the local weather map and transmit his forecast to Pomona for broadcasting. *(continued on page 8)*

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With all of the technical assistance in place, the grower had to translate theory into action. Large citrus ranches typically hired extra help during cold weather and had heaters and replacement fuel in place. While our property was comparatively small, the same principles applied.

My grandfather, Bert Vanatta, and his brother Elmer, having split 20 acres on the southeast corner of Third and Lexington in El Cajon, operated separately, but held some farming equipment in partnership. This included a Caterpillar '10' tractor, a variety of cultivating tools, and the orchard heating maintenance equipment. This arrangement passed to my grandmother, and then to my parents after my grandfather's death in 1928. As might be expected, our earliest heaters were coke burners ("smudge pots") and were refilled after each use as described above.

By the time I was in grammar school we had switched to oil. My Uncle Elmer had a storage tank set up on his property and we had a tank wagon to pull through the orchard to fill the heaters. Labor was easy to find in those Depression days, and until I was old enough to help, my father hired men to fire and maintain the heaters.

When I was about 12, my mother and father decided that I was old enough and the three of us agreed that we could save money by firing the heaters ourselves. We continued, however, to hire men to fill the heaters after the firing as my father worked days for the County Road Department, and I was at school.

Every night when there was a chance for frost, we listened to the radio voice of Mr. Young's Fruit Frost Warning Service and made our preparations accordingly. Most nights there was no need for worry, but when the frost alarm rang, my father would get up and assess the conditions. If it was early in the evening and the temperature appeared likely to drop into the danger zone, he would monitor it the rest of the night. Any time that the temperature dropped below 27°F (2.8°C), he would recheck the outdoor thermometers, perhaps inserting a thermometer into an orange to determine its internal temperature. If the temperature continued to drop, he'd wake my mother and me. We'd hustle into our clothes and out the door and ready to fire the heaters.

Beginning with the heaters nearest the house, I ran ahead of my father, knocking the caps off the heater chimneys and opening a combination fill cap/lighting hole on the base of the heater with a special slotted wrench. My father would follow me with a torch, light each heater, and rush on to the next. My mother would follow behind my father, closing the lower cap and adjusting the draft hole on the cap that controlled the air to the burning oil. A 'rippling' or 'purring' sound from the heater's combustion chamber indicated that the air/fuel mixture was burning efficiently. When the heaters were all lighted, we backtracked, making sure that they were burning properly and a maximum amount of heat was being produced.

While running ahead, I would often see our neighbors to the east, the Cunninghams, lighting their heaters; and to the south, the men working for Uncle Elmer with torches in hand, lighting and adjusting his. Soon, only the red glow of the lined-up smokestacks would show that the groves were protected, and that infamous cloud of black smoke was rising across the valley and hiding the stars.

As we waited for dawn, we drank coffee, ate some breakfast, and if there was any time for it, try to catch a little sleep. Sometimes, my father and I would walk over to the Cunninghams to talk about the price of oranges, compare temperature fluctuations, and speculate about what the new day would bring.

As sunrise approached and the danger of frost had passed, all those heaters had to be shut down. Row by row, we reversed our process, closing dampers and popping the caps back on the stacks. The time had come to begin the day's regular routine . . . and it might include a repeat of the same scenario that was just finished. (I have read that, in 1937, freezing conditions occurred ten days in a row, to the extent that there was a shortage of heater oil in Southern California.)

Yes, the trees are almost all gone, and the hard work of orchard heating has gone with them. It was inevitable. The costs of citrus production exceeded the profits and finally forced the growers to abandon their groves, and the land use was shifted to housing and commerce. Like so many others, I miss the trees, the fragrance of orange blossoms, and the glorious flavor of a fresh-picked California Navel orange. I also remember the labor, the burning sensation of heater oil on my skin, and the choking black smoke that rightfully concerned the community.

There was also a measure of pride that we citrus growers had 'fought the good fight' against the elements, had saved a valuable crop, and, in my case, I had taken a step in the direction of acceptance into manhood...and there is no greater feeling than that.

## ECHS Board of Directors

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# You are wanted... to help with school tours

Five schools have already scheduled tours of the Knox House Museum beginning in January 2014. That means approximately 500 third graders, their teachers, and parents are already committed to being introduced to the oldest commercial building in El Cajon and the El Cajon Historical Society.

Docents are especially needed to help share El Cajon's history with these curious third graders. Whether you can offer to help one day or more, your involvement can be a rewarding experience for both you and the schoolchildren. All you need to become a docent is a love of El Cajon's history and a willingness to share that love with others. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a docent, please contact Becky Taylor at (619) 440-3069 or at her e-mail address, [cruzbecky@cox.net](mailto:cruzbecky@cox.net).



*Docent Eldonna Lay, right, explains to a visitor at the Knox House how they used to peel apples.*

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## Local school district honors El Cajon history



*A bronze plaque that commemorated the elementary school's 77th year remains on one of the preserved buildings.*

photos by Eldonna Lay

The city block bordered by Main Street, Mollison and Roanoke reveals a modern Cajon Valley Unified School District that fosters a love for El Cajon's past.

A plaque memorializes the old El Cajon Grammar School which was located at that site in 1921. In 1953, the old Grammar School buildings were remodeled and the school was renamed John Ballantyne School.

When the Ballantyne School was closed in 2004, several of the classroom buildings were preserved and now serve as offices for CVUSD amid the new modern two-story buildings.

CVUSD sought to uphold its early roots by adorning its district office with reminders of the past. Photos of teachers and other faculty and staff from early elementary and high schools grace the walls of the board room and lobby; and several bronze plaques along the corridors commemorate historic milestones.

To learn more about school history, visit [elcajonhistory.org](http://elcajonhistory.org).



*The bronze plaque pictured above is located behind the third pillar on this former school building that is now offices.*



*Several classroom buildings remain along with the outdoor corridors.*

## Welcome New Members

- ◆ Al Archard Inc.
- ◆ Gloria Chadwick
- ◆ Tom & Linda Garity
- ◆ Jean Landis
- ◆ Robert K. Lynch
- ◆ Ralph & Pamela Speake

From:

El Cajon Historical Society  
Phone Messages (619) 444-3800  
P. O. Box 1973  
El Cajon, CA 92022

To:

### *Special thanks..*

We'd like to thank the Todd W. Hall family for their special Christmas donation and support of ECHS. Todd is a descendent of W. D. Hall, owner of the former lumber company on Main Street that supplied the valley from 1897 to 1971.

## January meeting to feature antique jewelry expert

The El Cajon Historical Society's January Quarterly Meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, January 23, at the El Cajon Sizzler Restaurant, 1030 Fletcher Parkway (next to Smart & Final). Lunch will be served at noon followed by an outstanding presentation on antique jewelry.

Three lunch entrees are available: steak, chicken, or soup/salad bar. Steak and chicken meals include tossed green salad, baked potato, an item from the dessert bar, and ice tea, coffee or soft drink. The cost for the meeting including lunch remains \$15.

Members will also have the chance to participate in, or contribute to, an opportunity drawing.

Reservations are mandatory and must be received by Monday, January 20.

### Meeting Reservation Form

Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15 each)

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ *Reservations not kept become a donation*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch Choice:

*(if more than one person, indicate number of each)*

Steak \_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_ Soup/Salad Bar \_\_\_\_\_

RESERVATION DEADLINE  
MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2013

Mail reservations and checks to:  
ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022-1973