



The Albany Historical Society

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July - September 2015

President's Message

We had a successful walking tour to the location of AHS's Albany Garbage Wars plaque. A special shout out to Robin Mariona for her help in facilitating the tour and to Karen Sorensen for her deft leadership and knowledge of the Albany Garbage Wars. Their efforts made for an informative and enjoyable morning outing.

Apologies to Liz Keiley-Roark for misspelling her name in our last issue and special thanks to her for taking over the long neglected AHS membership task.

Many thanks to Susan Hardie, daughter of Ruth Ganong, for donating Save the Bay and Albany Waterfront documents, and to Ed Fields and Maureen Crowley for "rescuing" Cornell scrapbooks and Albany memorabilia from the 1930s and 1940s from the estate of Kathleen Cardinelli. Thanks also to Dajjig Xu for sharing her mother's story, *The Brilliant Life of the Centenarian Ji Yuanhong*, and to Ellen Davis, for providing Ann Hayden's donation of historical memorabilia. Finally, thanks to an anonymous donor for some treasured Albany High School yearbooks. We are grateful for all Albany historical donations and encourage everyone to share their Albany history with us.

This fall, the Albany Historical Society is looking forward to working with Brandon Sheirich, a librarian archivist, who will be assisting us in the ongoing cataloguing and organizing of our collections and to Albany KABL technician, Brennen Brown, who is working on an "Albany Garbage" history video. We will be partnering again with the Albany Senior Center for more walks and Albany historical tours. We hope to collaborate with the Veteran's Administration in installing a commemorative plaque and to partner in a celebration of the Albany Veterans' Memorial Building.

Joan Larson, President

Upcoming Meetings:

Board Meetings: the first Friday of each month, 9:30 am, basement of the Community Center
Cataloging Meetings: the third Friday of each month, 9:30 am, basement of the Community Center
Check with Joan Larson, 510-526-7769 for possible rescheduling dates.

SPOTLIGHT

Our spotlight recognizes two dedicated and influential citizens of our city, our schools, and the youth of Albany.



PEGGY THOMSEN

1940 - 2014

When Peggy Thomsen and her husband John, a former Albany High School teacher, chose to settle in Albany our community was given a huge gift. Her commitment to family, education, and helping other people was absolute. Last year, while serving her second term as Albany Mayor, Peggy lost her battle with cancer and Albany lost a wonderful Albany advocate. Peggy raised three children in Albany, and was involved in numerous organizations from PTA to Girl Scouts and beyond. Peggy began her life as a public official as an AUSD Board member and later board president devoting eight years (two terms) to Albany schools. She went on to serve her beloved Albany on the City Council from 1996-2004 and again from 2008-2014.

This woman's sustained dignity and commitment to following protocol made her an ideal representative of all Albany citizens. She possessed the rare and unique capacity to listen and consider other peoples' perspectives.

An over 50 year resident, she supported her neighbors in establishing a Pierce Street Park and was instrumental in seeing it come to fruition.

Her local and regional affiliations were remarkable from Sport's Fields, Albany Jaycees to the March of Dimes and many, many more.

Experimental organic gardening was a true escape and love of Peggy's. Folks in town were the beneficiaries of her bountiful efforts both in the fruits and vegetables left on their porches and the delicious meals she created. Peggy had an odd quirk of sending her "Holiday Cards," which always had family and garden photos, in February; Another example of her unique style.

Peggy is sorely missed, we cherish the old photos of her in "go-go boots," receiving various awards and always smiling.

SPOTLIGHT



BILL LEWIS

1934 – 2013

Bill was born in Richmond, CA and raised in El Cerrito; fortunately Bill moved to Albany. He was a very active member of our community. In 1978, he was elected to the Albany City Council. Bill served for two terms and was selected as Mayor as well. A popular Council member, he showed respect for all who came to express their opinions before the Council, no matter whether or not he agreed with the opinion. Bill was a fair minded, hard working man who cared about people and making Albany a better community.

He was a natural as a father and seeing a need for youth activities, he created the Albany Teen Center. Bill and his friends built and established a place where youth could enjoy a variety of activities. The Albany Teen Center was named in his honor.

Another of his passions was the Albany Little League. He coached baseball for many years and served on the board and as president of the league. Bill loved the camaraderie, the energy, and the annual Little League parade.

Bill attended many Albany Historical Society events and was the consummate storyteller, who would regale us with tales of Albany's past. His ability to recall moments of Albany history was remarkable and always entertaining.

Bill's spirit would be greatly honored if those who participate in community activities or government try to remember Bill and emulate the many fine qualities he stood for.

Both of these dear people lost their only daughters at a young age, but continued to promote a positive and enriched environment for all Albany and both cherished Albany's "small town ambiance".

50 Years Ago

A deer was spotted in the area of Marin & Evelyn. Albany and Berkeley Police, and staff from Berkeley Humane were dispatched. The animal was herded to Live Oak Park.

Police Officer Bernard Johnson was selected to serve as the president of the Police and Fire Civil Service Club.

The city of Albany announced the schedule for the adoption of its first General Plan.

Mr. and Mrs. L M McDaniel of 935 Jackson were honored at a surprise anniversary party at their restaurant, Hazel's, at 1593 Solano Ave

Owners Edward and Josephine Vela and Noel McKnight surprised customers at their Highland Donut Shop (827 San Pablo Ave.) with free donuts, to celebrate eight years of business.

Les Berg and Johnny Mederios announced that they would open a market to be called "Super Stop" at the former Key Foods location at 747 San Pablo Avenue.

1447 Portland Avenue, with three bedrooms and Acrilan carpet, was offered for sale at \$23,600. Also listed was 1022 Cornell, a smaller two-bedroom home priced at \$15,800.

Shaw Hardware, on Solano Avenue, went out of business.

Acting Chief of Police Art Smith requested that the City Council fund " walkie-talkies" for officers, after an officer was injured at Golden Gate Fields. As was then the practice, the first officer had blown his whistle when he confronted the suspect, but the other officers did not hear the whistle, and did not respond until shots were fired.

Public hearings continued on a request to build a tri-plex at 1040 Evelyn. Cornell area residents objected to any further multi-units.

400 demonstrators followed the Santa Fe tracks from Berkeley in an effort to stop a troop train. Three demonstrators were injured, and two were arrested.

Most of the City Council meeting was devoted to a discussion of FACT Magazine. One Council Member, who described the publication as "pornographic", had insisted that no City funds be spent on its purchase. The members of the Library Board advised the Council that they had considered the matter, and had unanimously decided to retain the publication. The Council reduced their amount of library support funds by \$10.

The body of Diane Gerrish, of 1042 Peralta, was found at the San Francisco Presidio. Miss Gerrish, was a 1964 graduate of Albany High School.

Vince Nicori, operator of the Albany Dump, borrowed a boat being used by nearby pile drivers, to haul Fireman Tom Oakley's boat ashore. Oakley and two other firefighters were enjoying a day of fishing when they hit a floating barrel, overturned, and sank.

Contracts were awarded for the beginning of construction of the BART line through Albany. Although most of Masonic Avenue had been cleared, Don-del's Beauty Salon, an apartment building at Solano and Masonic, and a market at Marin and Masonic remained. Tommy's Market at Brighton and Masonic was one of the last to quit business, and was also to be demolished.

Jack Moody, of 917 Pierce Street, entered his pet duck " Flatfoot" in the annual Memorial Park pet show.