

# History Lives Here

**SPRING 2020**



## PVHA Temporarily Closed

by Judy Doering-Nielsen, President PVHA

PVHA has been closed to the public since March 17th to comply with the County of Santa Cruz's order to "Shelter in Place." We will continue to comply with the order until modified or rescinded. We continue to answer phone calls, collect mail and process essential maintenance items, while adhering to the County's guidelines for social distancing.

We appreciate your patience and support as we work our way through this difficult time and look forward to being able to work with the public as soon as reasonably possible.

### Vintage Picnic Still Planned

We continue to plan for our summer event "The Vintage Picnic." We have every hope that the date of June 28th will have us looking at all of this in our rear view mirrors. Our speaker this year will be Sandy Lydon, a well-known Historian and Educator. Once again, Monterey Bay Caterers will provide us with a delicious lunch under the historic oaks.

A final determination will be made the first week of May and should it be necessary to cancel for the year you will be notified



at that time. A popular event made even more popular by its guest speaker this year will cause seats to go quickly. Should you decide to mail your reservation in early and we find we have to cancel, your uncashed check will be returned.

Until then, be safe!

## Annual Meeting is Well Attended

by Lou Arbanas

This year's annual meeting and luncheon was held on January 10th and was well attended by board, volunteers and membership. The food was provided by Monterey Bay Caterers.

Vice President Chuck Allen stepped in for Judy Doering-Nielsen, President, who was recuperating. We had all department heads express their goals and accomplishments for 2019.

We were pleased to have hosted new committee chairs, as well as experienced chairs, this year. The board was represented



Committee chairpersons and board members gather at the annual meeting.

by Ken Dobler, Ralph Jacobs, Sharon Bystran and John Espinosa. New committee chairs, Keith and Thais Winkelman reported for the garden.

The house was represented by Mimi Crumpton, with Gayle

Invanovich and Gerry Martin in attendance.

Susan Jacobs and Bill Beecher reported on their projects for the Archive along with newcomer Bruce Burnett and digitizer David Delfino. Lynn Clough and

Gina Gallucci reported on their digitation projects and web and Internet contributions.

We also enjoyed a presentation by Ann Jenkins explaining the Blue Plaque committee project.



# Remembering Pajaro Valley's First Female Farmer

by Claudia Mize

Ella Thurwachter was one of the early female farmers in the Pajaro Valley. Her parents, Frederick and Catherine Thurwachter, were pioneer residents who owned 113 acres on Beach Road in Watsonville. Fredrick, a German immigrant, purchased the property in 1860. Ella, who was born and raised here, started helping her father in the field when she was a young girl.

In high school Ella took a dressmaking class and was hired as a seamstress. She rode a buggy into town and earned \$1 a day which she put toward paying off the mortgage. Her dressmaking career lasted only a week. When her father said that he would sell the ranch to her if she made that her career, Ella quit her job right then and began her ranching career. Ella was a hardy, alert rancher and amazed her neighbors with her agricultural skills. She gradually took over from her father and was the sole boss by the early 1900s. She ran teams of horses and worked

alongside the field hands. Ella could handle a six-horse team with ease. She competed in the horse races down what is now Main Street and at the Camp Goodall racetrack.

During World War I, Ella decided to grow navy beans because that was the only bean that could be taken on ships without absorbing moisture. Locals discouraged this because it was thought the rain would spoil the crops. However, Ella was determined. She hired 25 high school boys to work as laborers because men were scarce during the war. The bus brought the boys to work in the field at 3 a.m.

The price of navy beans became so high, the crops were being looted. To deter the thieves, Ella and some workers would take a lantern down at night and eat tamales in the field. When time came to harvest, Ella rented the only two threshing machines in the area. They harvested 33 sacks of beans per acre that year. The price went up to \$11 per sack and she made a great profit.



Ella Thurwachter

Ella was a good businesswoman, too. In a "Memorandum of Agreement" dated April 1914, 50 acres of sugar beets were consigned to Spreckels Sugar Company. She raised the first crop of certified potatoes in Santa Cruz County with seeds from Portland, Oregon and harvested 400 sacks of potatoes per acre.

One year she harvested 45 sacks of barley per acre. In 1924, when lettuce started to boom,

Ella was the first to plant it on Beach Road. To irrigate her lettuce crop, she was told to put a well in the middle of the ranch. It would have cost \$1,500 for pipe. Instead, she hired a surveyor, Burt Lewis, and put the well on the high ground off in a corner. Everyone said it wouldn't work... but it did! Over the years, Ella produced top-grade lettuce and nearly every type of local crop. Ella rotated crops yearly and took care of the land so it was rich and free of plant disease. All her life people told her she couldn't do things, but she always proved them wrong.

In 1928, Ella retired and turned the operation over to Mr. Sears. Ella and her niece continued living on the ranch. When Ella was interviewed for a magazine article in 1944 at the age of 76, she was described as "sprightly, active, youthful and generous of spirit." She was reportedly one of the best farmers in the valley. Ella Teresa Thurwachter died at 94 years old. (5/20/1868 – 2/6/1963)

## Croatian Visitor Researches Copriviza Families' Immigration to U.S.

by Lou Arbanas

Ivan Koprivica, 23, visited us for 19 days in February this year from his home in Gruda Croatia. He was the guest of Lynn Clough (Lettis). He wanted to do research on the Copriviza families that had migrated from Croatia as early as 1870c. We were able to give the gentleman photographs, and family histories to aid in his genealogical research.

Ivan speaks over five languages with multiple degrees. His English was flawless. He even had modern English idiomatic phrases wired, which made speaking with him so easy. While here, he visited with the Kusanovich, Colendich and Lasich families. He was spirited around to the various loca-

tions of Croatian farming. Ivan wanted to see local tourist spots like Yosemite and Hearst Castle. Lynn said that he was so well read on Hearst Castle that he was able to correct his docent.

This is the second time we have been able to act as a resource for researchers from Croatia. If you remember spring of last year we had Ivo Radonic, Head of the Department of General Affairs, and Mario Curic a Cavtat dignitary visit us on the occasion of Watsonville and Cavtat becoming sister cities. While here, they researched Croatian surnames as well, and told us of their hopes to open a museum in Cavtat to recognize and track the families of the diaspora. *Povijest postaje obitelji koja ponovno spaja obitelji.*



Ivan Koprivica, 23, of Gruda Croatia

(It is becoming one world uniting families with their histories.)





## The Topiary Trees on Beach Road – A Pajaro Valley Landmark

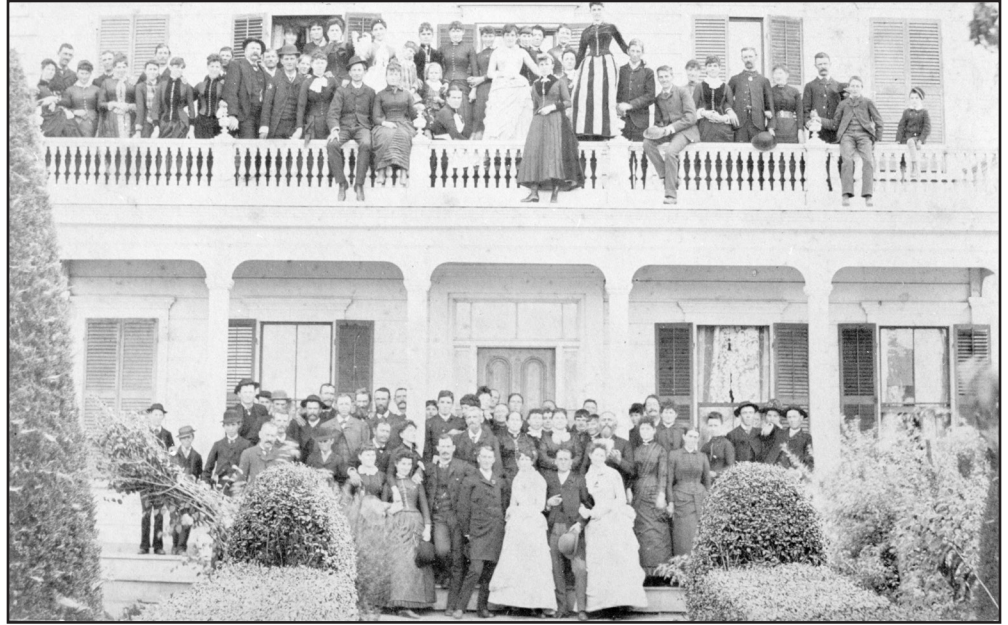
by Claudia Mize

The sculptured cypress trees surrounding the big white house halfway down Beach Road were a Pajaro Valley landmark from 1929 until around 1960. In 1929, in honor of Charles Lindberg's flight across the Atlantic, a Filipino gardener sculptured these Monterey cypress trees with the shape of an airplane and a star. He added other designs over the years, and when new gardeners took over, they continued this practice of trimming shapes into the trees. Many visitors made special trips to Watsonville to view these sculptures.

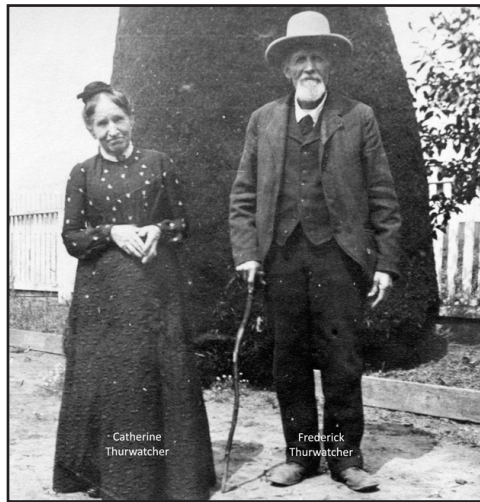
Local residents, as well as, the soldiers stationed nearby at Camp McQuaide (on San Andreas Road, where Monterey Bay Academy is today) drove by often to see the new sculptures. In 1860, Frederick Thurwachter, a German immigrant, purchased this property. He and his wife Catherine Sweeney, from Ireland, lived here with their 8 children.

In 1871, Frederick hired Mr. Allan, a contractor, to build a new two-story house. The Pajaronian wrote: "We are pleased to see this evidence of prosperity following Mr. Thurwachter. He is entitled to Fortune's smiles, he being one of our most industrious as well as one of our best farmers." The new house was built with old-growth redwood. The chimneys were built by Kingsley King. He was the father of Pajaro King -- the first white child born in the Pajaro Valley. This house was said to be a replica of Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois.

**Continued on Page 5**



This photo was taken at the Thurwachter house on Beach Road, Oct. 13, 1885, during the wedding breakfast for the marriage of Kate Thurwachter and Henry Sheehy. According to descendant Pat Pashley of England, the following are in the photo: lady on the right, looking into the camera, is the bride Catherine with groom Henry. Behind her is John Sheehy and his wife Ellen Mary.



Catherine  
Thurwachter

Frederick  
Thurwachter



# Items of Note As of April 1, 2019

## Memorials

### Jim and Marian Rector

- Melanie Kett Wirtanen
- Gayle and Elizabeth Ivanovich

### Gene Diccio

- Ken and Anne Dobler

### Paul Gnehm

- Ken and Anne Dobler

### Jody Ruso

- Hugh and Pat Hudson

### Marvin Byers

- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Jodi Frensley
- Stan and Judy Nielsen
- The Pavlovich Family
- Joy Hall
- Gayle and Elizabeth Ivanovich
- Ed and Jean Kelly
- Shirley Spain
- Frances Schwaan
- JoAnn Vear
- Ralph and Susan Jacobs
- Lou Arbanas

### Ellen Mann Christie

- Mary Ellen Irons

### Ruth Peterson

- Louis & Geneva Ivanovich

### Hong Chin

(This is to honor her and her family's many contributions to our community)

- Hugh and Pat Hudson

## Donations In Honor of: Judy Nielsen

- Ken and Anne Dobler
- Lou Arbanas

## General

- Stephen and Alice Bankhead
- Betty Jo Petersen
- Richard Jonathan Gurnee

## Capital Improvements

- William and Cloy Codiga
- Brandon and Trisha Kett

## Research

- Lisa Eiskamp
- Pajaro Valley Stamp Club

## Oral History Project

- Dobie and Ann Jenkins

## Costume Maintenance:

- Sharon Bystran

## Membership New Members

- Jeffery and Lisa Rosendale (Sierra Azul)
- John and Theresa Ucovich
- Keith and Thais Winkelman

## Renewed in November

- Chuck and Ramona Allen
- Sharon Bystran
- Karen Butier Basiulis
- Charles and Marybeth Bontadelli
- Ellen Christie
- Carl and Fran Dobler
- Steve Dufour
- Dr. and Mrs. Clinton Gurnee
- Tony Scurich (Scurich Insurance Services)
- Diane Robey
- Melanie Kett Wirtanen

## Renewed in December

- Stephen and Alice Bankhead
- Marguerite Bloom
- Erik and Kim Claus
- Ron and Connie Deller
- Lon and Annamarie Dugger
- Marilyn Hyde
- Emmanuel Brion and Luann Lauesen
- Don and Brenda Lauritson
- Dr. Clifford and Linda Leong
- Ken and Diane McElroy
- McSherry & Hudson (Complete Insurance Services)
- Arlene Okamoto Minami
- Bill Moncovich
- June Ivelich Pierce
- Walter and Patricia Phillips
- Deborah Rider
- Katharine Riordan
- Adolph Rosekrans
- Susan Scurich
- Alex Solano
- Billie J. Sorensen

- Art and Mary Jean Wagner

## Renewed in January

- Ag History Project
- Paul and Karen Bachan
- Nancy Ruiz DePuy
- Bridget Driscoll Fairhurst
- Jodi Frensley (A&F Drywall Co.)
- Gina Galucci
- Mary Ellen Irons
- Dobie and Ann Jenkins
- Joann Petznick
- Hank and Cathy Schimpeler
- Dr. and Mrs. David South

## Renewed in February

- Norman Atkins
- John Espinoza
- Frank and Loretta Estrada
- Patricia Johns
- Jeff and Karen Kane
- Donn Marinovich
- Clint and Karen Miller
- Shirley Spain
- Jolene Vukasovich

## Renewed in March

- Rosemary Anderson
- Maria Goretti
- Lawrence Lease
- John and Antoinette Lukrich
- Kathleen Moe
- William and Sally Neubauer
- Lynn Sullivan
- Mr. & Mrs. Barney Radovich
- Kathleen Reynolds
- Emil Yappert

## New Volunteers

- Keith and Thais Winkelman
- Connie Deller

## Thank You to our tradespeople and supporting Organizations:

- Murray Ullman Electric
- K & D Landscaping
- R. V. Computers
- Navarro Farms
- Alladin Nursery
- Santa Cruz Orchid Society
- P.V. Printing (Dan)
- Jon Chown Newsletter
- Melody Sharp Web



# The William Francis White Family: Pajaro Valley Pioneers

by Claudia Mize

The William F. White family has long been associated with the history of the Pajaro Valley. The White family's reputation as able business men, and progressive citizens was maintained through the generations.

William Francis White was born in Limerick, Ireland in 1816. His family came to America in 1820 and settled in New York. William's parents were Edward and Ellen (Griffin) White. Ellen was the sister of Gerald Griffin, the Irish poet (1803 – 1840).

A news article noted: "Through successive generations...many of the family have inherited eloquence of speech, ... power to express thoughts in vivid and rhythmic language, such as the Irish poet used...and shown commercial talents of high order."

William White went to Oxford Academy in New York. He became a commercial traveler (salesman). On a trip to Savannah, Georgia, he met Frances Russell, whom he later married. About this time gold fever broke out and they moved to California. In January of 1849, they sailed from New York with Captain Hamilton around Cape Horn.

The trip took 6 months. Mrs. White was the only woman among 300 passengers. They arrived in San Francisco harbor in June. William did not pursue mining but opened a mercantile with D.J. Oliver and J.R. McGlynn.

William and his family moved to San Francisco. He had a patriotic spirit and was interested in both local and national politics. In 1878 he was elected a member of the constitutional convention. Later Governor Irwin appointed him state bank commissioner. William died in 1890 leaving his wife and 8 children.

In 1874, Edward White, the oldest son, rented farm land in the Watsonville area and later bought Calabasas rancho consisting of 2,000 acres. He had a dairy business and developed a fruit industry. He sold some land but kept 800 acres and planted apples, apricots, cherries and other small fruits. He also had a dairy of 50 Durham cows. In 1889 he moved his family to Watsonville. Edward and his wife Annie (Royse) had 7 children.

In 1895, Edward White and William Dehart established the White & Dehart

lumber mill. Later it was changed to a box factory. In November 1899, he was elected County Supervisor; and he was, also, appointed by Governor Gage, a trustee of the Agnew insane asylum. The White family's reputation as able business men, and progressive citizens was maintained through the generations.

Stephen Mallory White, William White's second son, was born in San Francisco in 1853. Stephen graduated from Santa Clara College in 1872. He studied law with Hon. Charles B. Younger of Santa Cruz and was admitted to the bar in 1873. He served as district attorney and was elected to the United States senate. Stephen died in 1899 leaving his wife Hortense and four children: William, Gerald, Hortense, and Estelle.

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*Note: PVHA contributor Stanley D. Stevens submitted the article "Stephen Mallory White - A Biographical Sketch." A portion of the article is on Page 7 in this newsletter. The full article can be read on [PajaroValleyHistory.org](http://PajaroValleyHistory.org) website or on Pajaro Valley History facebook page.*

## Your Waters Once Ran Wild

*The Flood Control Act of 1944 granted the Army Corps authority to construct a flood control project on the Pajaro River.*

*The Corps completed this project in 1949, but six years later, the levees were breached. In 1966, a new project was authorized, but only small repairs and improvements have been made. Meanwhile, the levee has failed four times since 1966.*

*But in December of 2019, more than \$100 million in funding was found for the levee system and for the first time in 53 years, there is both the federal authority and the funding to move the project forward.*



by Steve Bankhead

*Local writer, historian, and compiler of Register Pajaronian articles.*

Your waters once ran wild across the land,  
pursuing varied pathways to the sea;  
until we broke your flow to our command,  
and since then neither of us have been free.  
We exercised our engineering art...  
an earthen wall divorced your home from ours.  
Like neighbors in a feud we dwelt apart;  
we in our barrios, you in your bowers.  
One day you rose and brushed away the wall,  
while all our leaders argued policies.  
And now from many structures great and small,  
we shovel out our muddled memories.  
We'll venture to repair these works of men,  
until you come to visit us again.

## Topiary Trees

Continued from Page 3

Frederick died at the age of 80 in 1914. Ella continued living there with her niece until Ella's death in 1963 at age 94. (see "Pajaro Valley's First Woman Farmer" in this newsletter.) The Thurwachter's were known for their lively dinners and neighborly gatherings.

In 1963, the trees were overgrown and cut down. The house was sold in 1997. The new owners moved it to San Andreas Road by cutting into 4 pieces. It was loaded onto aircraft carrier wheels and moved a section at a time. It was refurbished and is now a vacation rental in La Selva Beach --- the Flora Vista Inn. Happily, it is now full of life and laughter again.





## Christmas Tea 2019: 'There's a Chill in the Air'

by Claudia Mize

The Christmas Tea guests enjoyed delicious desserts and tea sandwiches, as well as, visiting with friends and browsing the house and archive.

The theme "There's a Chill in the Air" was reflected in the table center piece which was a lighted ice sculpture, plus in the display of our vintage furs and evening wear, and children's toys displayed throughout the house. In addition, we had four beautifully decorated Christmas trees.

Thank you to all the volunteers and visitors who made this a success!

The volunteers are now putting up a new display with the theme "1920s and the Women Suffragettes." Flapper dresses and memorabilia showing the suffragettes fight for the right to vote will be displayed.





Please join us for

# Pajaro Valley Historical Association's Annual Vintage Picnic

Sunday, June 28th, 2020  
11:30 am to 3:00 pm  
No Host Bar

Buffet Lunch by Monterey Bay Caterers  
Served from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm

Advance tickets \$30 for Adults;  
\$12 for Children under 12

Speaker: Sandy Lydon-emeritus historian at Cabrillo College  
Call 831.722.0305 or

Send checks to PVHA, P.O. BOX 623, Watsonville, CA 95077-0623



We will evaluate viability the first week of May and notify you if we need to cancel event this year.



# Stephen Mallory White: A Pajaro Valley 'Favorite Son'

compiled by Stanley D. Stevens  
*"Perhaps the most eminent of the State's native sons."*

*"the memory of California's greatest son"--  
 Mayor of Los Angeles*

Who was this "Favorite Son"?

Stephen M. White was born in San Francisco in 1853, attended a private school in Santa Cruz County from the time he was thirteen years old until reaching sixteen. In his earlier boyhood he had been taught at home by his father's sister, an extremely good woman, of superior and cultivated mind. At sixteen he was sent to St. Ignatius College, San Francisco, where he remained a year and a half. He then went to Santa Clara College, from which he was graduated in June, 1871. He studied law at Watsonville and Santa Cruz. He pursued his studies for about ten months in the office of Augustine W. Blair in Watsonville, about twelve months with Albert Hagan in Santa Cruz, and some eight months with Charles Bruce Younger Sr. in Santa Cruz. He was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court at Sacramento on the 14th of April, 1874.

After being admitted to the Bar, he went to Los Angeles to practice. Old lawyers, remembering the days of their youth, can

imagine his position, among strangers, without influence or prestige, yet undertaking the difficult feat of gaining a foothold. There was much in his favor, as he was an eloquent speaker, a fluent writer and a quick debater. Yet even with these talents there seemed no opening. For six months he struggled along, then decided it was useless to wait longer and began to think of removing elsewhere. After his mind was fully made up to investigate other towns, a man invited him to deliver an address at the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Having decided to leave, he first declined; but, on being

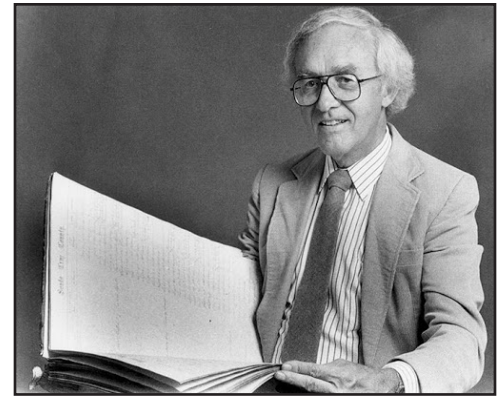


Stephen M. White

importuned, consented to remain and speak. At the conclusion of his able address to a very large assembly he was congratulated by hundreds and was told by many that he had opened a road to fame. This event changed his entire future. He remained, soon won a case, and from that day on had as large a practice as he could handle. An honorable service as district attorney was followed by his election to the United States Senate, where his efforts in behalf of the San Pedro harbor bill gave him national prominence.

White's connection with Santa Cruz is highlighted in some correspondence that has been preserved at the University of California, Santa Cruz. One example is:

Watsonville April 22d 1874



Stanley D. Stevens

Mr. Younger

*I drop you this line to inform you that I am still above board and I will probably be in Santa Cruz next Monday. You noticed, no doubt, that things went all right in Sacramento, as regards my application. Heydenfeldt has just written to my father offering \$4000 for the St. John; he says that Gregory has written "hopefully" regarding the probable result of the litigation, but that he [Heydenfeldt] desires to get rid of the matter & hence makes the offer. My father replied that he was not prepared to recede from his former proposal.*

*Yours etc*

*Stephen M. White*

Note: This is just a portion of the article. The full article can be read on [PajaroValleyHistory.org](http://PajaroValleyHistory.org) website or on Pajaro Valley History facebook page.

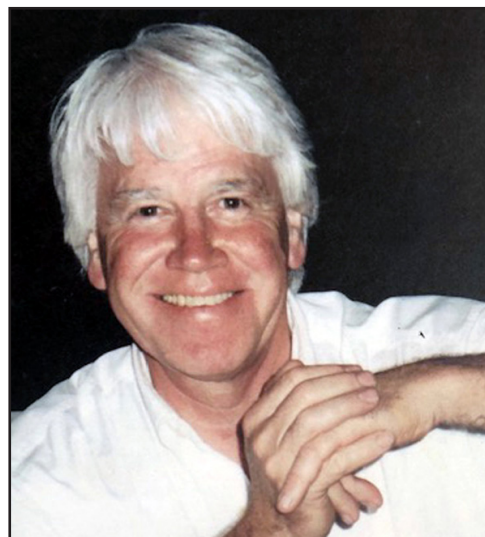
## PVHA Will Miss Marvin Byers

by Ken Dobler  
 P.V.H.A. Board Member

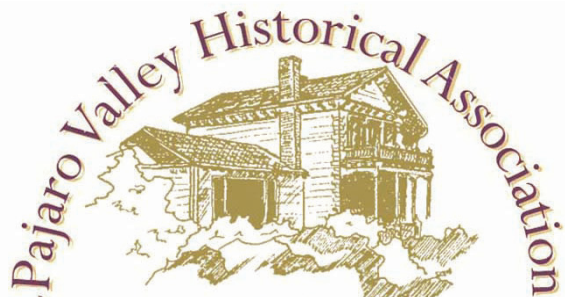
Marvin Byers was an exceptional person. We were classmates at WUHS, and when I became a Board member at PVHA over 20 years ago, Marvin was very active in our organization. Whenever a volunteer needed some advice (or work) on a situation, Marvin was right there to help.

On several occasions when I asked him for his assistance regarding repairs and maintenance at our facility, he was always happy to come to our aid. Marvin was our "go to" man for whatever was needed!

All of us will greatly miss him.



Marvin Byers



Preserving the History of the Greater Pajaro Valley  
Established 1940 ~ Incorporated 1956

### Board of Directors

Judy Nielsen, President  
Chuck Allen, Vice-President  
Ralph Jacobs, Treasurer  
Luann Lauesen, Secretary  
Ken Dobler  
John Espinoza  
Peter Navarro  
Tony Scurich  
Phil Ybarra  
Sharon Bystran

**Office Administrator:** Jodi Frensley  
**I.T. Committee Chair:** Louis Arbanas

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 623 Watsonville CA 95077  
PHONE: 831-722-0305  
EMAIL: info@pajarovalleyhistory.org



## YOUNG HISTORIAN AWARD

**AGES 16 - 25**

★ ★ ★

### A prize of \$500 to the winning project

(Research paper, video, volunteer work, performance, art piece, etc.)

**Enhancing the history of the Pajaro Valley**

**Application deadline: MAY 13, 2020**

**For information, please visit our website at:**  
[www.pajarovalleyhistory.org](http://www.pajarovalleyhistory.org)  
or call 831-722-0305

Sponsored by the Pajaro Valley Historical Association  
The Young Historian Award is made possible by a donor fund  
administered by the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County.

## Deadline for Young Historian Award is May 13

Do you know a family member or friend between the ages of 16 – 25 years old that could use an extra \$500?

The PVHA awards the Young Historian Award annually to a person who contributes to the history of the Pajaro Valley. The project can be any

type of the following: research paper, video, volunteer work, performance, art piece, etc.

Application deadline is May 13, 2020. For information on how to enter, go to [pajarovalleyhistory.org](http://pajarovalleyhistory.org) or call the PVHA office at 831-722-0305.

**Want to join now or need to renew? We'd love to have you become a member of PVHA**

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

**Please Make Checks Payable to "PVHA"**  
**PO BOX 623 Watsonville CA 95077**

Or join via our website at [www.pajarovalleyhistory.org](http://www.pajarovalleyhistory.org) (Visa or Mastercard)

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal Membership Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Donor \$50 ☐ Supporter \$100 ☐ Benefactor \$250 ☐ Patron \$500 ☐ Corporate \$\_\_\_\_\_

Other Donation \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be used for\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(We are updating our database and would like to include your email address please)

All contributions are tax deductible within the meaning of  
Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code — Tax ID 94-1663161

## Ways to Donate

- Become a Member
- Upgrade your Membership Level
- Make a general donation to the PVHA
- Make a donation to our endowment funds: The Historic Preservation Fund or Archive Fund, both established at The Community Foundation

**WE ACCEPT**

