Port Costa Museum & Archives Project Open House

When: Thursday, May 16, 2019

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Where: The Port Costa School

- Take your picture at the wheel of Port Costa's 1933 Fire Engine
- Tour the historic school classroom, library, and teacher's lounge
- Share your memories of Port Costa and offer Museum Display ideas
- Bid on a whimsical Lithograph of Port Costa

At 7:00 PM there will be a brief presentation about the Archiving Project, the Port Costa Museum, what's happened, and plans for the future. Beverages and light hors d'oeuvres will be served. Donations made to the PCCS/Port Costa Museum will be matched by the Crockett Community Foundation. Please contact Dee or Suzanne at **PortCostaMuseum@gmail.com**, for more information. We look forward to seeing you there!

Port Costa Fire Engine & Archive Project History

Story originally published in the Crockett Signal

According to stories told by Theresa Jurik, Chief Littleton, Harold Burnett, and Tom List, in the 1930s, the women of Port Costa held bake sales to raise money for Port Costa's first motorized fire engine. A retired 1933 Studebaker vegetable truck was purchased in Oakland and after adding ladders, fire hose, a big bell, and sturdy back platform, the fire engine was pressed into service.

There are a great many Port Costa stories that would be lost to history had it not been for some forward-thinking people who stopped to look backwards. In 2006, Linda Clark of Port Costa initiated a 10-year Oral History Archives Project where she, as interviewer, and Betty Bailey, as videographer, recorded interviews with over 60 past and present Port Costa residents who shared their memories of living in this town.

Theresa Jurik, Dee Stewart, and Linda also started placing into binders and boxes the artifacts, documents, newspaper clippings, and photographs they had collected for years. These boxes were stored in garages, basements, in the Burlington Hotel, and with the Port Costa Conservation Society at the School.

Around this time, Tom List discovered that the old Studebaker fire engine, housed in the lower garage of Crockett Station 78, was a piece of Port Costa's history. It needed a serious mechanical revival, so he fixed the brakes, wheels, and ailing engine. He varnished the ladder, polished the bell, and proudly displayed the fire engine at the Port Costa Car Show and drove it in Port Costa's annual 4th of July Parades.

This year, the Archives Project and the old Studebaker Fire Engine have found a home. The Port Costa Conservation Society has officially launched the Port Costa Museum at the historic Port Costa School. This Museum and Archives Project is being guided by volunteers Dee Stewart, Suzanne Statler, and our Intern, Sophia Ramos, who chose this as her Senior Museum Studies Capstone Project at SF State.

Thanks goes to the Crockett Carquinez Firefighters Association who donated the old Fire Engine and the 1905 push type Fire Hose Reel to the Port Costa Conservation Society / Port Costa Museum. It will now be displayed and driven as a living artifact from our local history.

PCCS School Grounds Volunteer Report & Acknowledgments

Pictured below is Sally's Daffodil Garden on Canyon Lake Drive, so beautifully cared for by Jen Copeland. The Port Costa School Rose Garden will have splendid blooms this summer, all without using a single toxic chemical, thanks to Victoria Ryan. Steve and Lewis Jacobson put in lots of volunteer hours to cut the grass along the outside perimeter of the school and inside the playground. It sure made a big difference! John Mann recently cut the ball field tall grass with his new mower, getting the parking area ready for the May 25th Town Wide Yard Sale. Thank you to the volunteers who keep the school grounds beautiful for all to enjoy!

Construction Update

New stairs at the school were poured on Friday, April 26th, 2019! This work is the largest component of the "Port Costa School Public Safety and Security Improvements" Grant that was funded by the CCF, volunteer hours, and our own matching funds from donations and fundraising events. This work was accomplished after completing the long process of permitting and review required for the exterior of buildings like ours that are listed on the National Register of Historic places. The project improves Building Safety and Security by providing required exiting via the new staircase and walkway, improving building security, replacing non-working stairwell lighting, door hardware repair, secure storage for our archives, and building envelope maintenance.

Baking Classes at the School

Port Costa resident, Rene Beauchemin (pictured below), taught a sour-dough bread baking class at the school on Monday, April 8, 2019. The class was a great success; everybody had lots of fun and even the more experienced attendees learned some new techniques! The class was announced on the town bulletin boards, but we learned afterwards that not everybody checks those boards regularly. The Conservation Society is currently working on a Port Costa e-mail list, to better announce upcoming classes and events. Rene has promised to host another class in May, so stay alert for that announcement!

PCCS 2019 Election Results

April 15th's PCCS Board of Directors election was a very close race resulting in the two incumbents, Anne Mann and Michael Domagalski, retaining their seats. The current five-member Board consists of Anne Mann, Michael Domagalski, Ridge Greene, Jeff Wilson, and Suzanne Statler, who was recently appointed to fill out the remainder of the term vacated by Connie Cameron.

Idiot String & Peripatetic Players

Idiot String, the theatre company hosted by the PCCS, organized a BBQ and Obstacle Course Event at the Port Costa School on Saturday, April 27. The event was held to kick off rehearsals of their site-specific production, *Port Stories*, that premieres in June! In the coming weeks, you will likely see the company rehearsing at the schoolhouse and walking to and from the downtown area. Unlike their previous plays which have travelled all throughout the Bay Area, *Port Stories* is only happening here in Port Costa.

Thanks to funding from the Crockett Community Foundation, Idiot String is offering $5 show tickets to local residents, available starting May 1. They are also offering in-school performance workshops at John Swett High School and Carquinez Middle School. Please visit their website, **Idiotstring.org** for more information.

Upcoming Events

- **Sunday, May 5: Grizzly Peak Century Ride**
  - The Port Costa School is one of the designated rest stops along the 112-mile course from Moraga to San Pablo Reservoir, to the Carquinez Strait, Crockett, Port Costa, and beyond!

- **Monday, May 13: Port Costa's Annual Green Cleanup**
  - Eliminate fire safety hazards and beautify your yard! Bring your brush, tree trimmings, weeds, and green waste to the Port Costa School ball field for chipping & mulching. Green waste may be dropped off two weeks ahead of the event (*please use the open ball field gate at Reservoir Street*). This is a free service provided to Port Costa residents by the Contra Costa County Public Works Department. Gloves, safety glasses and ear protection, ice water and sodas provided. Sponsored by the Port Costa Conservation Society. **VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!**

- **Thursday, May 16: Port Costa Museum and Archives Project Open House**
  - 6:00-8:00 PM - Beverages and light hors d'oeuvres will be served – please see Page 1 for more details!

- **Saturday, May 25: Port Costa Town Wide Yard Sale**
  - 9:00am-3pm – Please contact **PortCostaTownWide@yahoo.com** for information on becoming a vendor or selling your items at the School. 10x10 spaces are available for $30 and all proceeds go to the Restoration and Historic Archive of the Port Costa Conservation Society. The PCCS will be selling hot dogs and managing parking at the schoolhouse during the event

- **Thursday, July 4: 10th Annual Fourth of July Celebration**

- **Sunday, August 4: Port Costa Car Show**

Spring 2019 Newsletter
Port Costa Conservation Society
PO Box 36, Port Costa, CA 94569

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Port Costa, CA 94569
Permit No. 3

PCCS Grant Committee Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 6pm, followed immediately by **PCCS Board Meeetings** at 7pm.

Honoring Betty Bailey

Long time Port Costa resident, Betty Bailey, 79, passed away on March 20, leaving a big hole in our community. In 1968, high school sweethearts Betty and Clayton Bailey moved from Wisconsin with their two children Kurt and Robin, and became part of Northern California's quirky "Nut Art" scene. Clayton created fantastical ceramic monsters and "fossils" of imaginary creatures and ran the Port Costa Wonders of the World Museum. Betty became the video chronicler of Clayton and his alter ego Dr. Gladstone's humorous performance art.

Betty and Clayton's community interests went beyond the art world. They became involved in the Port Costa Town Council and the fight to preserve the town's surrounding open space which led to the formation of the Port Costa Conservation Society. They have been active members of the PCCS ever since.

Betty served the citizens of Port Costa as the Postmaster relief worker and as an Election Official when the school was our voting place. She and Clayton also used to sponsor "Clay Days" at the school teaching "kids of all ages" how to create ceramic face mugs, gargoyles, and creatures of their imaginations. Their good humor and openness gave timid artists the courage to create.

Annually from 1994 through 2000 and then every two years until 2006, the PCCS put on the World-Famous Port Costa Talent Show. Betty and her video camera were there on her "Channel 1-1/2" raised Press platform capturing all the comedy, magic, song, and dance acts. Without Betty's footage, it would be difficult to explain the full experience and range of performances to the uninitiated; thanks to Betty, these shows are preserved to amuse and inspire!

Collaborating with Linda Clark on a living history project, Betty videotaped interviews of many Port Costa old-timers and current local residents, preserving each one's personal history and recollections of life in Port Costa, creating a rich video archive for future generations.

Along with videography, Betty was an avid competitive tennis player, a “feared” member of Port Costa’s Fighting Doormats Bocce Ball team, and practiced ceramics, basket making, and drawing. Self-taught using watercolor pencils, she drew narrative scenes depicting her subtly humorous take on everyday life situations. Her sketches are charming in their simple honesty, which can also be said of her videos, and of Betty herself.