



RIO VISTA MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

www.riovistamuseum.com

January 2025

Message from Museum President Peter Hamilton

I hope your 2025 has gotten off to a good start. 2025 is a big year for the Rio Vista Museum. It is our 50th anniversary. We are really excited and plan to commemorate our role as Rio Vista's historian.

Although the Rio Vista Museum began in 1975, the story of the Museum really begins with the following year – 1976. Rio Vista, like much of the country, was looking forward to the nation's Bicentennial. The City of Rio Vista received information on how to be designated a "Bicentennial City." Mayor Milton Wallace liked this idea and formed a Bicentennial Committee to get the process started.

One of the qualifications for becoming a Bicentennial City was having a museum displaying the area's history. A sub-group was formed to formulate plans on how to make a museum possible. This group included Shirley Shearer, Pearl Hamilton, Genevieve James, Mildred Hansen, Esther Pierce, Marianne Harden, Madelyn Church, Barbara and Jim Tracy, Elliot Stevenson, Pat Gates, Albert Jongeneel, Buck Farnsworth, Joe Betts, and Iris Jacobs.

One of the first issues the committee dealt with was finding a location. Someone suggested a then-vacant building at 16 North Front Street. It had recently been an automotive parts store. However, for much of its history – 1927 to 1965 – the building served as a blacksmith shop owned and operated by Andy Cavagnaro. As the building was being prepared, the museum committee was often reminded of this. One board member recalled, "Fine soot from the blacksmith shop's forge had floated in the air

and landed on the beams and rafters that framed the galvanized corrugated iron building. Now every time wind blew or we hammered a nail that rattled the building, down came the soot." The committee also had to address a leaky roof.



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In September 1975, the committee officially became the Rio Vista Museum. Genevieve James served as the Museum's first president. The committee began gathering items that showed Rio Vista's history. In the beginning items were only loaned to the Museum, because everyone assumed the Museum would be temporary.

The Museum received help from the Rio Vista Farm Bureau. In observance of the Bicentennial, the Farm Bureau under the leadership of June Anderson had been gathering farm machinery and equipment from local farms and ranches. Some of this equipment dated back a hundred years. The Farm Bureau contributed its collection to the museum.

The Museum first opened during the 1975 Rio Vista Bass Derby. Along with displaying what it had collected, the museum also had an art show. The original plan was to maintain the exhibition through 1976, the Bicentennial year. However, the organizers were so pleased with what had been collected, they decided to make the Museum permanent.

In 1977, the Rio Vista Museum began raising money to purchase the building. We were finally able to buy the building in 1978. Originally the building had only two rooms. Over the years, the Museum added two more rooms, as well as an upstairs for storage.

For 50 years so many people and businesses have supported the Museum in so many ways: serving on the board, helping run activities and events, and even just being a member. It would be impossible to thank everyone individually. However, I would like to mention two people in particular. One is Krug Dunbar. Although not on the original committee, Krug was an important part of the Museum from almost the beginning. Krug helped spearhead a group that raised money for the purchasing of our building. In the early years of the Museum, Krug received, catalogued, and placed almost all of the items on display. The other person is Mary Bell O'Connell. Mary Bell was president for many years, and in my opinion, the heart and soul of the Rio Vista Museum. Mary Bell constantly promoted the Museum and its activities.

This year's annual meeting will be Wednesday, January 29 at 6:30 p.m. with a social at 6:00. I hope you can join us as we kick off a year of celebrating our 50th anniversary.

In this newsletter, you will find an envelope to use when renewing your Museum membership. Thank you very much for being a supporter of the Rio Vista Museum.

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Building Improvements

In researching the museum's 50-year history, the question of building improvements and a leaky roof appear repeatedly. As you undoubtedly know, we have made many improvements during the past year. Here's an excerpt from a 1983 newsletter: *The new roof, complete with gutters, downspouts, insulation and two vents cost us \$7,104. The Victorian front, including the inset door and window boxes, cost \$14,557.*

Please donate to our Building Fund!

Upcoming Events



Come on down the rabbit hole for our 5th Annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party at the Rio Vista Museum. Don't miss out on this fun event. Raffle prizes, photo booth, games and delicious food. Saturday, April 12th at 11:00 a.m. Tickets are limited, so act fast! For tickets or information, contact Renee Tingey at (707)374-8455 or Dana Lapp at Rio Vista Muffler, (707)374-2484.

***Check us out on social media -
-- Facebook, Instagram and our
riovistamuseum.com website***



50th Anniversary Merchandise for Sale

Check out our retro
T-shirts, tote bags, tumblers,
stickers, and magnets

We are looking for information and photographs.

Did you attend Rio Vista schools? We are looking for stories and memorabilia, especially stories about Rio Vista teachers.

Did you live in Rio Vista in the 1970s? As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we would love to see – and scan -- pictures from that time.

When you come across those old items in the attic or garage, think of the museum.

Memorials

On behalf of the Rio Vista Museum, we would like to thank those who have made a memorial donation in the past year in honor of their loved ones.

The following were so honored during 2024:

Bob Brainerd	Duncan McCormack
Richard Dana	Terry McMullen
Ann Jeffrey	David Ross
Manny Lira	Tom Sanchez
Mary Macedo	Robert Weber
Leola Marks	

**Phil Pezzaglia to Speak at
Annual Membership Meeting
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
Pressley Vineyards Wine Tasting at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting at 6:30 p.m.**

Come to the museum to enjoy a program with our very own curator and font of Rio Vista knowledge, Phil Pezzaglia, and to elect the 2025 officers and board members. Phil will be talking about the Beginnings of Rio Vista.

Images from Some of the 2024 Museum Events

