

Elk Grove Historical Society

# The Stage Stop Gazette

July 2020 August



Volume 41 Issue 7 - 8

A publication of the Elk Grove Historical Society.  
Representing the communities of Elk Grove, Wilton, Sheldon, Franklin, Bruceville, Point Pleasant, and Sloughhouse.



Inside the Museum Files:

## Barbed Wire Telephones

In the early 1900's when most exchanges were limited to fair-sized cities, sixteen rural families in Elk Grove, California had their own phone system.

Led by farmer and veterinarian Jim Mitchell, they bought wall phones with crank handles from a mail-order house, and connected them to the top wire of well-mended barbed wire fences that crisscrossed the area.

They had no phone contact with the outside world, of course, but their system kept them in touch with each other, each family had its own combination of long and short rings as its own "private number." Though all bells rang on all phones, your private ring told everyone the call was for you—and listening in on private conversations – called "rubbernecking" – was stickily forbidden.

Within a few years, tall poles, real telephone wire and a company run system, complete with a central office and operator, arrived in Elk Grove, and the whole world opened up to the families on the barbed wire exchange.

- From the memory of Jim Mitchell's daughter Birdie Mitchell-Esser of Stockton



The Historical Society has decided to continue our closure until September 14<sup>th</sup>. This includes all events through June, July, and August, except for weekend Yard Sale donation drop offs in August (see below) because we still plan on having our huge Yard Sale in September. We felt that there wasn't anything that important that can't wait a few more months before re-opening. We are sorry. The health and concern for our members has always been important. You matter, please stay healthy, and we will see you in the Fall.

## September 18, 19, 20

8:00 am – 3:00 pm every day

Due to the Coronavirus we canceled our Yard Sale for June but have rescheduled to September. Thanks to the generosity of our members, our annual Yard Sale gets bigger and better every year! While you are at home, it's not too early to start cleaning out your closets, cupboards and garages to select treasures you no longer use or need for donation to this year's big 3-day sale September 18, 19, 20. We request **usable items in good condition, nothing broken or with missing pieces, and clean clothing**. Items you might find to donate include kitchen & tableware; bed, bath & table linens & towels; furniture; wearable clothing & shoes; small appliances; books, DVDs, CDs, vinyl records; artwork & frames; décor items; crafts & holiday decorations; children's toys & games; bicycles & scooters; patio furniture; yard & garden equipment.



**Donated items** can be brought to the museum on weekends (Saturday & Sunday) between **8:00 am to 12 noon** starting **August 1 through September 6**.

A volunteer will be on site to accept your donation at these times only and will give you an in-kind donation receipt you may use for tax purposes. Arrangements can be made after August 15<sup>th</sup> to have large items like pieces of furniture picked up at your location by calling Dennis Buscher at (916) 479-2158. Items we cannot accept include: Used mattresses, bed pillows, couches, over stuffed chairs, baby car seats & strollers; TVs, computers, monitors, printers and stereos.



# Rhoads School Report



We are hoping the next school year will be closer to normal. The calendar is prepared and is waiting for schools to schedule, which some have. We have instituted some added cleaning steps, but have always provided a safe setting for the students and teachers.

Calendar of Events for July-August 2020 – Nothing planned through August



## THANK YOU

The final results arrived in late June from the Big Day of Giving and amounted to \$10,529 for the Elk Grove Historical Society from 89 wonderful donors. A percentage of that was shared with the Rhoads School for scholarships.

Thank you all for your kindness.

## We need your help, please.

During our Rhoads School Living History program, we need individuals to start a fire in the stove at the school for the students on cold mornings. It takes only a few minutes and is easy. Two fire starters have retired and we need two to replace them and commit to about 10-15 fire starts during a regular school year. If interested please call Louie at (916) 682-1335 Thank you, we could really use you.

## Treasurer's Report: Jeanette Lawson

<b>Operating Accounts:</b>	<b>May 2020</b>	<b>June 2020</b>
General/Opr/Rest Fund	\$36,730.07	\$34,607.40
Wightman Memorial Fund	zero	zero
<u>Donations</u>	<u>\$150,000.00</u>	<u>\$150,000.00</u>
<b>Total Account Balance</b>	<b>\$186,730.07</b>	<b>\$184,607.40</b>
<b>Real Estate Rental Account</b>	<b>\$19,947.69</b>	<b>\$21,446.19</b>
<b>Museum Store Account:</b>	<b>\$4,249.09</b>	<b>\$4,249.16</b>
<b>Rhoads School Account:</b>		
Operating Fund	\$501.38	\$501.38
<u>Scholarship Fund</u>	<u>\$6,747.45</u>	<u>\$8,782.45</u>
<b>Total Account Balance</b>	<b>\$7,248.83</b>	<b>\$9,238.83</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$218,175.68</b>	<b>\$219,586.58</b>

The Stage Stop Gazette  
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Our website:

[www.elkgrovehistoricalsociety.com](http://www.elkgrovehistoricalsociety.com)

Elk Grove House and Stage Stop Museum  
 Is located at  
 9941 East Stockton Boulevard

Adjacent to the West Entrance of  
 Elk Grove Regional Park

Museum is open the first Saturday of  
 each month, noon to 4:00 pm.

Research Library is now open by  
 appointment only.

To schedule an appointment:

Email:

[eghs@elkgrovehistoricalsociety.com](mailto:eghs@elkgrovehistoricalsociety.com)

Or

[msjlaw@comcast.net](mailto:msjlaw@comcast.net)

Or

Call 916-685-8115



The Lincoln Highway passed  
 through Elk Grove in front of the  
 Elk Grove House & Stage Stop  
 Museum on what is now East  
 Stockton Blvd.

Rhoads School

Email: [lsilveira@comcast.net](mailto:lsilveira@comcast.net)

(916) 682-1335

Newsletter Editor, Design, & Layout:  
 Louis Silveira

### New Member and Membership Renewal Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

If this is a business membership, please complete the following:

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Types of Membership and fee structure

#### Check one

- \_\_\_ Individual Person.....\$20.00
- \_\_\_ Family Group.....\$30.00
- \_\_\_ Student (full time under 25).....\$15.00
- \_\_\_ Senior Citizen (65 to 79).....\$15.00
- \_\_\_ Senior Citizen (80+).....FREE
- \_\_\_ Business, Corporation, Association.....\$30.00
- \_\_\_ Lifetime (Member & Spouse).....\$400.00

Note: EGHS is a California Non-Profit Corporation  
 Dues may be deductible under IRS code 501(c)3