



Crow's Call



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Rotary Meeting — May 5th by Karen McNamara

We were welcomed at the Visitor Center of Forest Home Farms by our greeter, Hermann Welm, and the volunteers who work in the gift center. The thought for the day was: "Women and cats will do as they please.. Men and dogs should relax and get used to it. " Also noted was that the cabinetry in the visitor center was custom made by Hermann.



Visiting Rotarians are Jean Ohman from the Dougherty Valley club who also led us in the patriotic song – God Bless America. As Randy Jackson from American Idol would say – "a little pitchy, out of key on a few notes, but I loved it". A future Rotarian was present as a guest of Barry, Allen Ware.

We had a guest flag bearer this week, as Chris Gallagher recalled his days as a boy scout and gallantly held the flag at almost the correct angle for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Other guests were Kari Gardella, from Clubsport San Ramon who was so kind to help Dennis with the Cinco de Mayo lunch at the Farm. Mike Conklin introduced his guest James Armstrong, who is a future Sentinel of Freedom and will be leaving his military service soon.

Announcements and Thank You's

- Guy Greco received his Paul Harris Fellow pin +4
- Honorary Rotarian submissions are due to Horace. His request was ably translated by Kathe Mitchell
- Blackhawk Film Festival tickets for May 5th were offered



Service Above Self

- Chris Gallagher provided a summary of the May 1 hike and let everyone know that our own Tom Port saved the day by saving the group from a vicious rattlesnake attack. Hikers reported that the advertising brochure was less than forthcoming about the stellar waterfalls, but a good time was had by all nonetheless.



- Carolyn Degnan passed out cards with information on spotting a tick.

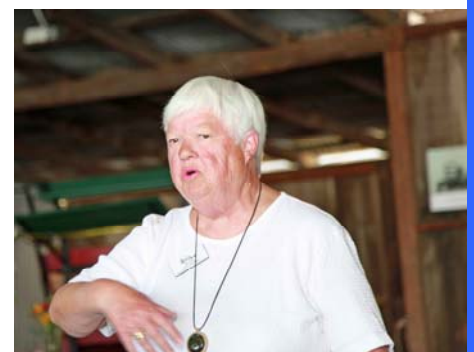
- Paula Silva announced plans are underway for the July 4th parade float. Help is always welcome
- Day at the Races on May 21 – Program information forthcoming. Parking is included.

Kathy Gailey accepted school supply donations for a Cal High Interact project that will be donated to a school in Kenya.



Pres-Elect Robin reminded next year's Board to submit their budget to Geoff Disch. She made a report on the Education Foundation dinner at Bridges in which Terry Koehne was honored. Photos of Rotarians in compromising positions were passed around. Chris Gallagher was fined.

Jean Ohman gave a brief history of Forest Home Farms which is owned and operated by the City, under a partnership with the San Ramon Historic Foundation. She introduced Pat Boom and Mary Willers, who are Foundation volunteers. Over 25,000 visitors came through the park last year. Nearly 3000 3rd grade students visit each year for tours. The Glass House, also on the property, was renovated by the City a few years ago. A new water tank and windmill will be installed on the site. Thanks and recognition to Ed Duarte from Aztec Construction for their donations of time to the project. Jean reminded the Rotary that they had donated the horse, named Ramone, to the farm for use at the Forest Home Farms. For more information on Forest Home Farms, the website is: <http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/Parks/programs/historic.htm>



The Historic Foundation will have an Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social on August 13 from 10-3 pm and everyone is invited.



Speaker and Presentation



Our very own Dr. Bill gave a heart wrenching tale of the Harlan Family, their trek and challenge from Michigan to California by way of Sutter's Fort. Attached is a great summary of Dr. Bill's presentation with no factual errors by the scribe since he was so kind as to provide a copy. Thank you.

The greeters gift was won by the speaker. The progressive raffle question was Who declared May 5th as Cinco de Mayo. Answer: Don Juanito Juarez. Prize increases by \$20.

Next week's greeter is Chris Erbe

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HARLANS IN CALIFORNIA?

- 1. Challenge of Change:** The Harlan wagon train with about two dozen members of George's extended family (including his 90-year old mother-in-law) and 8 of his dairy cow herd of 80 arrived in civilization in late October 1847. The family had been farmers in Michigan, but in the first few years in the new land, they made money as soldiers, lumberjacks, stable/dairy operators, gold miners, hotelkeepers, merchants and ferryboat operators.
- 2. Arrival Sutter's Fort:** The Harlans paid Sutter back for the help he had extended when they were abandoned by an unscrupulous trail guide in the wilds of Nevada. Peter Wimmer took a job with Sutter to work in a sawmill being built in Coloma in the foothills.
- 3. Fremont's Army:** The Harlan's arrived in enemy territory in the middle of a war. All the eligible men volunteered for Fremont's Army and marched off to fight in Southern California. (Only about 1500 Americans were in the whole state when the Harlans arrived.) Not many left to rescue the Donners when people learned of their plight. *Guess who commanded the Harlans?*
- 4. Mission Santa Clara:** The women, children and old men were left at the abandoned mission for protection, but typhoid broke out and George lost his wife and his eldest daughter that first winter.
- 5. Return from War:** The men returned and scrambled to find work in a rapidly changing world. Many ships were arriving at Yerba Buena, and there was a great demand for lumber. The Harlans began logging the native redwoods on the Oakland Hills, splitting them into fence posts and carrying them by barge across the Bay. (They put up fences for the military leaders who had quickly staked out property in the new settlement – Larkin, Fremont, Sloat, etc.)
- 6. Stable & Dairy:** The Harlans soon discovered they had something people wanted to buy. They had horses which they could rent out to the sailors who landed in port after months on ships around Cape Horn and were anxious to rediscover dry land. (They rented horses for half-a-day, although there wasn't much to see except sand dunes.) They also had those dairy

cattle that survived the trip and were among the few milk cows in the city. (They sold milk by the bucket for \$5.)

7. **William Leidesdorff, Partner:** One of the people the Harlans did business with was William Leidesdorff, an early entrepreneur of mixed race. He had come with money from his father and operated one of the first hotels in the City. He would help finance the Harlans' big venture in the Gold Fields.
8. **Fowler Girls of Calistoga:** The Harlans had crossed with a family called Fowler. The oldest of three girls had lost her husband after the Weber Canyon disaster and was left with little kids. George, a widower, his nephew Jacob and his son Joel, went to the Fowler home in Calistoga and ended up marrying the three Fowler women. George's daughter was the first "American" baby born in San Francisco.
9. **Harlans and the Gold Rush:** In January 1848 gold was discovered at Sutter's mill in Coloma. Peter Wimmer's little boy actually found the first nugget, called the Wimmer Nugget, and his mother used her lye soap kettle to test it. Despite Sutter's efforts to keep the news from going public, Wimmer wrote to George and urged him to come up with as many supplies as they could carry. The Harlans borrowed several thousand from Leidesdorff and bought as many supplies as they could and arrived in Coloma in spring of 1848.
10. **Making Money:** The Harlans operated one of the first general stores out of a tent. They sold tools and supplies to the miners at exorbitant prices. They made serapes out of carpeting for the local Indians who wanted to look like *vaqueros* and they panned for gold. They made a lot of money before their wives decided that raising kids in the diggings would not be good. They sold the store and their supplies to whom?
11. **Return to the Bay:** On the trip back from Coloma, Mrs. Duncan, now 92, gave up the ghost. Her body was buried in a nice meadow on the banks of the American River near the Sacramento. A few years later the early legislature decided to build the new State Capitol on that very site. They say her ghost haunts the halls, pleading, "Are we there yet?"
12. **Potatoes by the Bay:** The Harlans used their money to buy a parcel from a local rancho owner. Unfortunately all the titles to property ended up in

American land courts, and the Harlans lost their investment. However, they had planted several acres in potatoes and were able to harvest them before they were evicted. They made another small fortune for those potatoes in 1849 with the arrival of thousands of hungry miners.

13. **Splitting Up:** The Harlans went their separate ways around 1850. One branch opened a hotel named for Fremont; another ran a general store at Mission San Jose with extra tall doors; a third ran a ferry over the San Joaquin south of Stockton; George died in 1850 and was buried in Livermore; and Joel bought land from Norris in San Ramon.
14. **Two Tax Bills:** Joel built his ranch house in the hills right near what is now the Alcosta exit from I-680 in 1852. That year his brother-in-law, Henry Clay Smith, surveyed the county line between Contra Costa and the newly created Alameda County. Running the line through the boondocks, Smith was looking for landmarks for the line and decided to run it right through Joel's house. Joel was not amused about having tax bills from two counties.
15. **Harlan House Rebuilt:** In 1857 Joel torn his house down and moved it a couple of miles north where it stands to this day. He named it "El Nido," the Nest, and it has been a prominent landmark for the last 154 years. It is widely considered the oldest standing structure in San Ramon. My great-grandfather grew up there until he married in the 1870's.
16. **Saving El Nido:** Last month the City Council voted to take possession of the house, now in disrepair, which had passed into the control of the Geldermann Family through the marriage of Joel's daughter. A citizens' committee is now considering various sites where the house might be moved where it can be refurbished and dedicated to some public use. Suggestions gratefully received. More information at www.harlanfamily.org, under "The Great Trek."

Meeting: Thursday, 12:15
Crow Canyon Country Club
711 Silver Lake Dr., Danville

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San Ramon Rotary

Greeter Protocol

When you are blessed with the duty of being our greeter, you should remember the following: (1) You should be at the meeting by 11:45 am in order to greet everyone as they come to the meeting. (2) You should bring a "greeter's gift". The gift should be approximately \$20.00 in value. (3) You will be leading the flag salute, giving the inspiration, and introducing the visiting Rotarians. It is a good idea to watch the visiting Rotarians sign in, so that you can ask them about any complicated names or classifications, or just plain BAD handwriting. cff

Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Future Programs:

May 12th - Roosevelt Speech - John Tatum

Upcoming Events and Dates to Remember

May 19th - Job Shadow Day - Patti Hennigan

Schedule of Greeters

May 12th

Chris Erbe

May 19th

Walt Trembley

