



## **You are Invited to an Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social**

**Sunday, November 22, 2009**

**1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the new History Room**

**Lafayette Library and Learning Center • Golden Gate Way**

See the new home of the Lafayette Historical Society  
View Old Betsy up close, and visit with friends.

## **President's Message**

The Grand Opening of our long awaited History Room is about to occur. The opening day celebration is **Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please Join us and the community and enjoy all the festivities that the day will include. The History Society has been asked to create a display in the main room of the Library. We will display artifacts of the indigenous peoples of Lafayette – the oldest artifacts of the town displayed in the newest building in town. Elam Brown has been invited to tour the library during the festivities. Old Betsy will be prominently featured and free photographs will be taken of your children and grandchildren in front of her.

The Board wants to thank all of our long term friends and members by having a celebration of our own. **Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>** will be our old fashioned Ice Cream Social. It will be our way to show off our space and thank you for your patience in waiting for this dream to become a reality. *The Latest Scoop of Berkeley* is donating the tasty gelatos we will be serving. The History Room is located just east of First Street on Golden Gate Way. We look forward to seeing you between 1 and 3 on Sunday. Old Betsy will be residing in her permanent space next to our History Room.

While treating you to gelato, we will be trying to tempt you to become a volunteer in the History Room. Training sessions for volunteers will be held prior to working with visitors to the new room. We will contact you to make arrangements for those classes. Please phone Betsy Willcuts (283-0706) or Mary McCosker (284-5376) to volunteer.

Another first for us will be having an electronic Newsletter. For those of you who have given us your email address, you will receive this Newsletter again in a couple of days. We want to try this to save the expense of postage. If you do not receive the electronic Newsletter, please let us know by contacting us at our web site – [www. Lafayettehistory.org](http://www.Lafayettehistory.org). We would like to get your feed back on receiving your Newsletter in this way as well.

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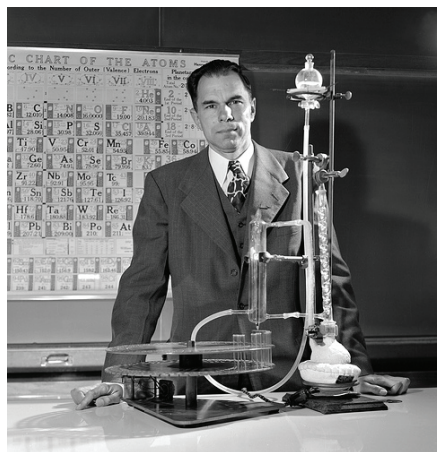
## Historians Needed for the LHS History Room

**LHS History Room is here!** On November 14th, the Historical Society's long awaited permanent home will become a reality with the opening of the History Room in the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Between November 14<sup>th</sup> and the end of December LHS Board members will be manning the room. Starting in early 2010, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays historians will be needed to greet visitors, introduce our extensive archives and resources, and assist with various projects to preserve and add to the collections. Training will be provided in early January.

Here is your opportunity to become involved in this exciting new facility and to learn more about Lafayette history. For information, call Betsy Willcuts– 925/283-0706 or Mary McCosker–925/284-5376

## Who is Glenn Seaborg?—And Why is There a Glenn Seaborg Consortium at the New Library?

Glenn Seaborg was a nuclear chemist, co-discoverer of plutonium and nine other trans-uranium elements, scientist on the Manhattan Project, UC chancellor,



author, Atomic Energy Commission chairman, teacher, conservationist, husband, father and Nobel Prize winner. And, he was a Lafayette resident.

Born in Michigan in 1912, his family moved to California when he was ten years old. A valedictorian at his high school in Watts, he graduated from UCLA in 1929 and received his PhD. in chemistry from UC Berkeley 8 years later. At UCLA he had an incredible opportunity in meeting Albert Einstein. Seaborg later said, “I was thrilled that he was so human, so easy to talk to. He talked a little bit in German to me. I did the best I could.”

In the late 30's, Cal had a 27-inch and then a 60-inch cyclotron, used for bombarding elements with

subatomic particles. Dr. Seaborg's collaboration with John Livingood produced the isolation of a number of significant radioisotopes including iodine-131, cobalt-60 and iron-59. The iodine-131 was later a basis for laboratory tests and treatments for thyroid and other blood component issues. As a treatment it later helped to prolong Dr. Seaborg's mother's life. He also co-discovered technetium-99 with Emilio Segre. This isotope was later used extensively in nuclear medicine until the advent of CAT scans and MRI's. Eventually, Dr. Seaborg co-discovered over 100 radioisotopes and created theories for predicting their usefulness and properties.

By 1940 Dr. Seaborg was working with Edwin McMillan and John Abelson. With the 60-inch cyclotron, they created element 93, neptunium. With two other scientists and the cyclotron he isolated element 94, plutonium, in 1941. Both elements were named after planets, Pluto at the time being a planet. Then with Emilio Segre they found the isotope plutonium-239. One of its properties is that when it was bombarded with neutrons it releases a large amount of energy. This had valuable properties for making the atomic bomb, the war being on.

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In 1942 he married Helen Griggs, a secretary for another Nobel prize winner, Ernest O. Lawrence. They had six children together.

The war beckoned and Dr. Seaborg went to Chicago to work on the Manhattan Project at the University of Chicago Metallurgical Laboratory under Enrico Fermi. The Manhattan Project eventually employed over 100,000 people and had 30 research and development sites. The Germans were also working on a nuclear bomb, the race was on. Dr. Seaborg, with a team of scientists isolated enough plutonium-239 to create the atom bomb. He and others petitioned President Truman to drop the first bomb on an uninhabited island in Japan. However, the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although he felt the US was justified in using the bombs, Dr. Seaborg promoted peaceful uses of atomic power afterwards.

Two more elements were discovered in Chicago, americium and curium. Seaborg patented both of these elements. Americium's use in smoke detectors created income for Dr. Seaborg late in his life. All of the new elements presented a dilemma in the periodic table as they were not easily categorized. Dr. Seaborg came up with the theory of the "actinide concept", the only significant change to the periodic table since it was created in 1869.

After his stint in Chicago, Dr. Seaborg returned to UC Berkeley in 1946 to become a full professor. He directed nuclear chemical research at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory operated by the Atomic Energy Commission. That same year President Truman appointed him a member of the AEC's General Advisory Committee. More elements were co-discovered. The Nobel prize in Chemistry was awarded to Dr. Seaborg and Edwin M. McMillan for their discoveries in the chemistry of trans-uranium elements in 1952. Dr. McMillan helped in the design and construction of cyclotrons and synchrotrons. At the Nobel banquet Dr.

Seaborg gave his short speech in Swedish, the native tongue of his mother.

At this time his family moved to Glen Road in Lafayette where he lived until his death on February 25, 1999.

Glenn T. Seaborg was a professor at UC Berkeley until 1958. Four years earlier he became an Associate Director of the Radiation Laboratory. In 1958 he became the Chancellor for three years. Then President Kennedy made him the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, a post he held for 10 years. This precipitated a move to Washington, D.C. Dr. Seaborg helped negotiate the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Dr. Seaborg returned to his beloved Cal in 1971 as a University Professor in Chemistry and taught for more 8 years. He co-founded the Lawrence Hall of Science and became its chairman. He advocated nuclear power and felt that disposal of spent fuel would easily be resolved with a technical solution.

Dr. Seaborg loved sports and played many games with his children. He wrote a book on Pacific Coast Intercollegiate Athletics. He was a conservationist and served on an East Bay Regional Parks District committee and with Citizens for Urban Wilderness Areas. He played golf and was a serious hiker. With all of his research and discoveries, he said that his love of teaching was a close second. He felt that teaching freshman college chemistry was hard work, but that his research helped prepare him for it.

Glenn Seaborg is said to have written 50 books, including, *A Chemist in the White House: From the Manhattan Project to the End of the Cold War*, and over 500 scientific papers. He has received over 50 honorary degrees and numerous other awards, including the prestigious National Medal of Science. He served on many boards of scientific

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## Who is Glenn Seaborg?—Continued from page 3

societies including as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Chemical Society. He met over a lifetime Albert Einstein, Edward Teller, Robert Oppenheimer,



Leonid Brezhnev, Nikita Khrushchev, the ten presidents from Roosevelt to George Bush, Sr., plus Presidents Hoover and Clinton. He held 40 patents.

In 1974, while still alive, element 106 was named after him, seaborgium. The naming caused much consternation and wasn't official until 1997. The 1974 Discover magazine's review for the year noted that Dr. Seaborg could receive a letter addressed in chemical elements: seaborgium, lawrencium, berkelium, californium, americium. In 1995, Caroline and Eugene Shoemaker, famous comet hunters, named asteroid 4856 after Dr. Seaborg.

With Glenn Seaborg's varied interests and strong commitment to education, it is no wonder that the planners for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center would name the Consortium of 12 supporting educational members after Glenn Theodore Seaborg. The charter

members are: the UC Lawrence Hall of Science, the Oakland Museum, the Chabot Space and Science Center, the Commonwealth Club of California, the Oakland Zoo, the John Muir/Mt. Diablo Health System, the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, the California Shakespeare Theater, the Greenbelt Alliance, John F. Kennedy University, St. Mary's College and the UC Institute of Governmental Studies.

This quote is from Glenn Seaborg upon being appointed Chancellor of UC Berkeley in 1958:

*"There is a beauty in discovery. There is mathematics in music, a kinship of science and poetry in the description of nature, and exquisite form in a molecule. Attempts to place different disciplines in different camps are revealed as artificial in the face of the unity of knowledge. All are sustained by the philosopher, the historian, the political analyst,*

## Donor Recognition

We would like to thank the following sponsors who have helped underwrite the cost of the children's photographs with Old Betsy on opening day. They are— Larry Blodgett, **Blodgett's Abbey Carpet & Flooring**; Lisa Duncan, **Lisa Duncan Photography**; Larry Duson, **Branch Manager, Bank of the West**; Lynn Garnica, **Goodmouse Graphics**; Lance Ghulam & Sara Casey, **Handlebar Toys**.

Carlos Gomez of **Moises, Gomez & Associates, Lafayette** has generously restored the clothes you will see displayed in the History Room.



**OPENING SOON!**  
**NEW HISTORY ROOM**  
Beginning **November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays  
**10:00 a.m. 'til 2:00 p.m.**

The **Lafayette Historical Society** welcomes everyone to visit our new home in the *new* **Lafayette Library**.

Enter our space on Golden Gate Way  
next to the Corner Book Store.

*Old Betsy* will be on display *every day*.

Gift items will be on sale including ~  
Commemorative Stamps • Indian Arrowheads  
Fire Hats • Tee Shirts • Post Cards *and*  
Lafayette, by Mary McCosker and Mary Solon



The new LHS History Room under construction.



Books being delivered into the new Library & Learning Center

## History Detectives

Several times a month there are historical inquiries made to the Lafayette Historical Society via our website. Sometimes it is simple to find answers to questions....other times the answers aren't known by anyone on our Board. As a result of these questions there will be a column in each newsletter with questions that have been asked and answered and questions that still need answering. If you can help with the answers to these inquiries please feel free to contact me by phone or email. Thank you.

—**Mary McCosker** 284-5376 or Msm102746@aol.com



At the recent Art & Wine Festival, a gentleman who had stopped by the LHS booth asked about the origin of name of the street where he lives....does anyone know where Solana Drive gets its name from?



We received a request on our website from a woman in Arizona looking for the burial site of her Great Great Great Grandfather at the Lafayette Cemetery. With the help of Patricia Howard, Superintendent/General Manager of the Alamo-Lafayette Cemetery District, we were able to provide her with information and a photo of the gravesite. She was thrilled:



*"Thank you so very much for locating Mr. Buck, my Great Great Great Grandfather! He was born in Ohio in 1838. He later moved the family to Montana, where they were listed in the 1880 census in Butte City. He and his first wife Hanna had 8 children. She died in childbirth in 1883. He remarried and later moved to California. We have a photo of him in front of the house he built in Lafayette, circa 1915. I would be happy to send you a copy. Could you please let me know*

*how I could obtain an obituary from a newspaper?*

*Thank you again, Sarah in Tucson, Arizona*

*P.S. Historical Societies rock!!*



We are trying to establish a date for this aerial view of Highway 24 and Lafayette (looking west) probably from sometime in the 1950's. Does anyone have an educated guess as to the year?



## A Town Hall for Lafayette

*Excerpted from a paper written by Ruth Dyer in 1977:*

### Part 2: The Twenties and Thirties

In the early 1920's Lafayette was growing and new requests were made of the Lafayette Improvement Club. The Board of Directors discussed the feasibility of building a post office with the help of the Lafayette Bible Class from the Methodist Church. Dances were to be given, half of the proceeds to go to the club, and half to a post office fund. A lot was purchased for the post office, and the old school house was moved there. Also in the building were the library and the telephone "central."

In 1924 the Lafayette Fire Department was given permission to hold two dances in the hall. Proceeds supported community improvements. There was no charge for the use of the Town Hall. During the following year the firemen gave dances to pay for an electric sign reading "Lafayette."

"A deficit of about a dollar in the treasury which made it impossible to pay the insurance due on the hall was covered when Colonel Garrett donated a dollar." This was in 1930 and times were hard indeed. Should the Town Hall be remodeled or torn down? It was decided to repair the hall and make arrangements for heating it. A new stove was put on trial, and repairs were made. The repairs proved satisfactory, the stove not. It was returned, and the Town Hall remained cold. Despite the frustrations, interest in improvements continued. Plantings around the building were planned; no water was available. In April, 1931, a large open meeting was held previous to an election to form a water district. Eventually Lafayette would be served by the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

With its windows screened, electrical lights with reflectors installed for proper lighting, the Town Hall was ready for recreational use in 1932. Boys aged 12 to 125 were allowed to have games, and once a week the Camp Fire Girls had a recreation night. In 1930, The Forum, forerunner of the Lafayette

Women's Club, began to hold its meetings in the Town Hall. It contributed a fair share of the heating and lighting expenses and paid one-sixth of the cost of the drapes, \$6.00. Membership in The Forum grew rapidly from 32 to 85. Thus it was necessary to meet elsewhere, first in the Fire House, and in the 1940's in the Veterans Memorial Building.

During the following years ways were sought to finance a better-looking and more usable Town Hall. Use of federal assistance was considered. For example, CWA (Civil Works Administration) funds and labor were available provided the improved property was given to the County. It was even suggested the land be deeded to the Lafayette School District which could then rent the Town Hall to the Lafayette Improvement Club. The Board of Directors pondered. Eventually the Lafayette Improvement Club, as a nonprofit corporation, decided to finance the remodeling through sale of stock. Old stock issued since October 31, 1913, was recalled and new stock issued.

At this point in 1935 new life began to center around the Town Hall and funds were raised for its renovation. For several years the Fiesta de Lafayette was held in connection with the Annual Horse Show of the Contra Costa County Horse Show Association. On a Saturday and Sunday in August there was a parade of 300 horses, followed by boxing and wrestling, a bathing beauty revue, booths, games, and dancing and other activities. All the events were held in or near the Town Hall.

In 1936 \$1,700 was raised for the construction of a new town hall, or for renovations of the existing building to conform to the Spanish architecture of the Lafayette School. Additional money was raised to build the tennis courts and playgrounds at the school. Each community organization was asked to submit suggestions for a new town hall. Eventually two plans were submitted: one calling for construction of a new building to cost \$10,000, and the other a \$6,000 remodeling project. In March, 1937, the Board of Directors decided the existing Town Hall would be remodeled. A new

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building would not be built. Plans for a larger auditorium were eliminated. In two years the Veterans Memorial Building would be completed. It would have a large auditorium available. It was believed also that one would be needed soon at the Lafayette School. Large groups could be accommodated there, across School Street from Town Hall. \$1,500 plus a maximum of 10% was voted for the remodeling job.

This did not solve the piano problem, however. The Improvement Club had been moving one in from the Lafayette School when necessary, as the old piano was inadequate. It was necessary to purchase a new instrument. Money was raised by subscriptions of \$.50 each. In six months there was a new piano and an extra \$8.00 in the treasury. The citizens again had proven their generosity.

Renovation continued. A new floor was laid. This was accomplished with "the help of labor supplied by Sheriff Miller," his men laying a load of crushed rock on the lower level. Apparently most of the rest of the work was accomplished through volunteer efforts! New chairs were bought, two oil burning heaters installed, the piano box moved to the level of the stage, and the library room almost completed. A fire escape was built on the south side of the building, and a knotty pine exterior finish added.

One of the chief motivations for remodeling the Town Hall had been the need for a new location for the Lafayette Library. The old school building at 3553 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, owned by the Lafayette Improvement Club, could no longer serve as a post office, telephone exchange, and library. The library would be moved to the Town Hall. A mass protest meeting followed this announcement. This would be too inconvenient a location. Think of the distance! A Superior Court injunction was handed down, but removed when the Lafayette improvement Club assured the court the removal would be temporary only.

Actually the Lafayette Library was an old institution, and many residents had interested themselves in it personally. It was started by the three-member Bible Class of the Lafayette Community Methodist Church and handed over to the Improvement Club as its responsibility. The library had shared its site with the post office and telephone exchange for thirteen years. Following its removal, the library would remain on the first floor of the Town Hall for two years only. In 1940 it was moved to a new building on the Lafayette School grounds. The American Legion had initiated the search for a permanent location. Jointly with a committee from the Lafayette Improvement Club, the members recommended a site of land held by the Lafayette Fire District. The formation of a new library committee was initiated. Funds were raised, and the new building was the result. Because of the sensitivity concerning the library site, townspeople arose in the middle of the night and moved the library to the new building.

Completed ten years previously, the Lafayette School was now overcrowded. A temporary classroom was set up on the first floor of the Town Hall. However, rumors persisted that the Town Hall was unsafe, despite an engineer's report that it was safe for as large a crowd as it could hold. In response to public opinion the Board of Directors authorized a new survey of the building. Apparently this second engineer's report allayed fears. Classes met in the Town Hall.

Improvements to the Town Hall continued to be made. A composition shingle roof was added. Service and silverware for 100 people were purchased, and a townsman offered to provide a sink and stove for the kitchen. The Board of Directors recognized that the Town Hall had been designed for the use of the entire community. The building was now made available to all civic organizations in Lafayette for the cost of the janitor, water, and lights. This was about \$5.00 a month.

—*Mary McCosker*



## It is Going to be a Special Invitation to the Opening!

Old Betsy is going to be out encouraging **all** to participate in the opening of the **Library and Learning Center**. For most of the week prior to the opening, Old Betsy will be moving around Lafayette with a **big** sign on each side inviting all to attend the **Grand Opening** on **November 14**. The plan is to drive to each of the schools in Lafayette during a time when the school children will be around to let them know that **all** are encouraged to participate in the opening. As usual, anyone that wants to ring Old Betsy's bell can do it during the school visit. It is expected that the children will carry the invitation to their homes and encourage everyone to be there on **November 14**. There will even be a opportunity to have a picture taken with Old Betsy and supplied in a special folder commemorating the event. We understand that Old Betsy will lead the parade from the Old Library to the **new library** where opening ceremonies will take place. If all goes well, Old Betsy may move right into her new home by the end of that day.

—George Wasson



### 2009 Directors

President: Dorothy Walker .....	283-3303
Vice President: Marechal Duncan.....	283-6812
Treasurer: Paul Sheehan .....	284-1287
Recording Secretary: Mary McCosker .....	284-5376
Corresponding Secretary: Oliver Hamlin.....	283-6822
Fund Raising: Judie Peterson .....	876-0628
Photo Retrieval: Mary Solon .....	283-7335
Program Development: Keith Blakeney .....	284-2221
George Wasson .....	284-4603
Tom Titmus .....	299-2030
Nancy Flood.....	283-3409

### 2009 Committee Chairs

Historian, Ruth Dyer .....	283-8312
Walking Tours: Mary McCosker.....	284-5376
Fire Engine: George Wasson .....	284-4603
Potluck Dinner: Oliver Hamlin.....	283-6822
Membership: Oliver Hamlin.....	283-6822
Newsletter: Dorothy Walker .....	283-3303
Volunteers: Betsy Willcuts.....	283-0706

## President's Message *(Continued from page 1)*

The History Room is to be all about Lafayette and the community members that have made this wonderful place we will call home. The History Room is expected to be open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. We will have a computer available for those of you who would like to do research on-line. Our photo archive will be available, as well as, oral histories by long time community members and other resources we have collected. There will be display cases with items that have been given to the organization over time, including newly restored clothing. Please come in and give us your ideas and suggestions of how we can make the Room serve your interests.

The Board welcomes you to your History Room and look forward to seeing you on November 22.

—Dorothy Walker, President of the Board

# Lafayette Historical Society Membership Application

(Please photocopy form for additional names)

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

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City-Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Categories and Annual Dues

(Please check one)

- ☐ Student Membership \$10.00
- ☐ Individual Membership \$25.00
- ☐ Family Membership \$50.00
- ☐ Life Membership \$250.00 (one time fee)
- ☐ Sponsor Membership \$500.00

## Please indicate areas of special interest

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity          | <input type="checkbox"/> Data Base Entry of Photos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research-Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo Collection          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephoning        | <input type="checkbox"/> News Clippings            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Displays           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Engine               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories     | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking Tours-Outreach    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History Room       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |

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*Please mail this application to:*

**Lafayette Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 133**

**Lafayette, CA 94549**