



Serving our community for 35 years  
Alta Dutch Flat Gold Run  
**COMMUNITY**

Volume 35 – No. 3 PUBLISHED BY THE DUTCH FLAT COMMUNITY CENTER WITH MEMBER SUPPORT **Fall 2024**

## Oktoberfest in Dutch Flat

By Sarah Fugate



Photo by Deb Harris

Sarah Fugate, Heidi Suter, and Wendy Lowery in traditional Dirndls

Several years ago, the Dutch Flat Community Center began the tradition of Oktoberfest in Dutch Flat. Last year, that tradition was expanded to include live music and was held in the back garden of the Dutch Flat Hotel. This year, the tradition continues at the Dutch Flat Hotel, on October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 1 pm.

one of the oldest craft beer breweries in the United States, located in Booneville, California. Roxanne Barns, Vice President of Sales, lives in Dutch Flat and was instrumental in securing this donation. Lunch starts at 1 pm. \$15 a plate for bratwurst, roll, sauerkraut, potato salad, pickle and dessert. Shannon Malloy has donated her pastry artistry, supplying the desserts. Live music from 1:00 to 5:00 pm by the Bob Woods Trio. Come early! 125 lunches for sale on a 1st come, first served basis.

DUTCH FLAT COMMUNITY CENTER

**OKTOBERFEST**  
SATURDAY  
OCTOBER 5TH

**Location: Dutch Flat Hotel Garden**

**Music:**  
**BOB WOODS TRIO**

**FEATURING ANDERSON VALLEY BREWERY**

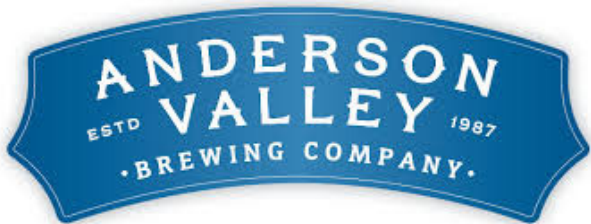
**DINNER: SAUSAGE, ROLL, POTATO SALAD, SAUERKRAUT, DESSERT**

Pay at Door Entry Ticket **\$15**  
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**Hours:**  
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Oktoberfest is a celebration of German culture, food and beer that was first celebrated in 1810 in Munich, Germany to celebrate the wedding of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. Festivities include music, dancing, food, beer and dressing in traditional Bavarian clothing.



Anderson Valley Brewing Company is graciously donating incredible seasonal beers. They were founded in 1987 and are

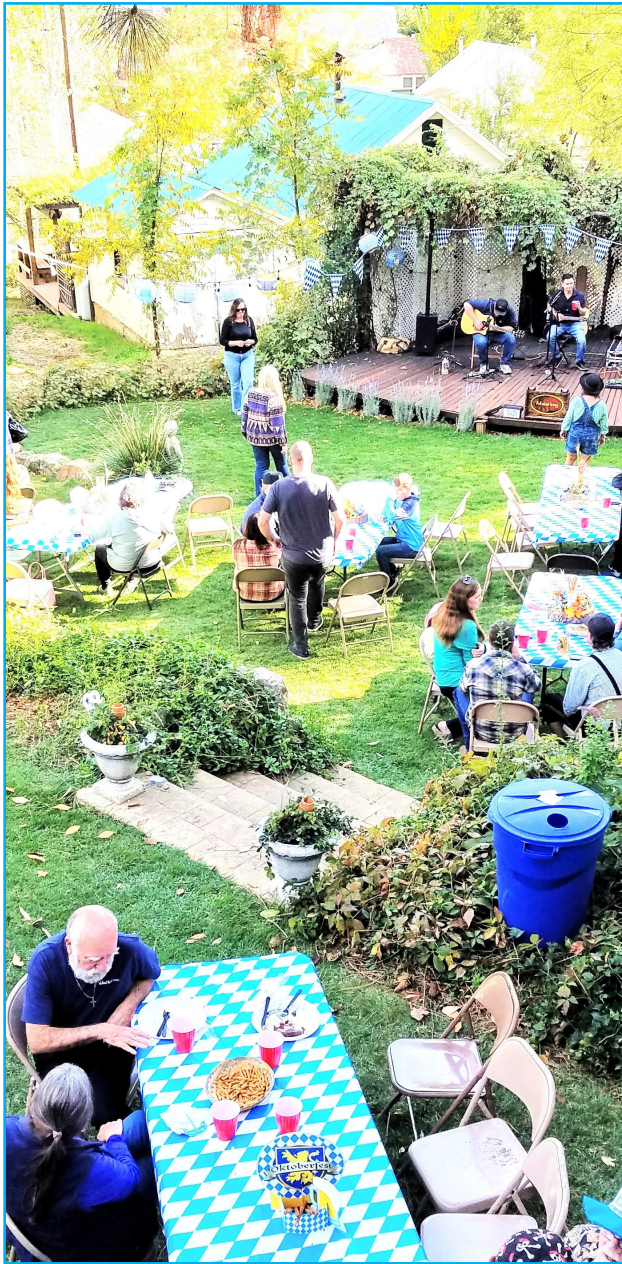


Photo by Sarah Fugate

Dutch Flat Hotel biergarten

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## Update from Alta-Dutch Flat School

By Shana Brown

The flurry of excitement that a new school year brings is slowly fading behind us as we settle into the familiar routines inherent to the calendar's schedule. While students may not be present in the school building during the summer months, much happens to prepare for the new year. We hired a new head of maintenance, Brian Mavricz, who worked not only to learn the new job and the ins and outs of an aging building, but also to get the school shining and ready for students and staff to return. Brian is also a staff member whose son goes to Alta. As a staff, it's always fun to have "staff kids" at school, and I have fond memories of my own son in my class trying to decide whether to call me mom or Mrs. Brown. We welcomed a new teacher this year, Ms. Katharine Vaclavik, who is teaching fifth through eighth grade math and science. She is already a wonderful addition and fitting in well to our school community, as well as a new neighbor in our community at large.

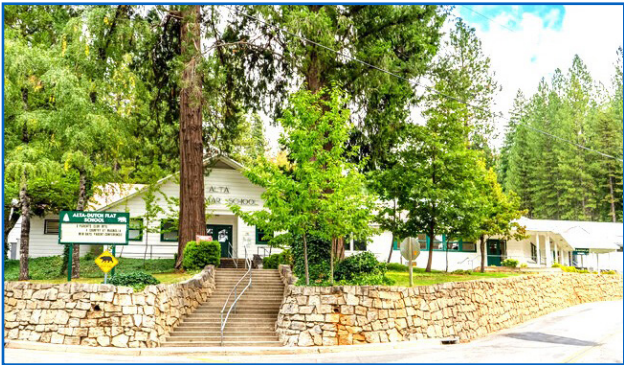


Photo courtesy of Homes.com

Alta-Dutch Flat School

The students returned for the first day of school on August 13. Yes, I know many older folks have memories of not returning to school until after Labor Day, but I believe we've been heading back in August for much longer than folks think. Every school has to convene for 180 days in an academic year, thus necessitating the August return. For our older students, though, we try to keep summer alive and walk to the pool on the two Fridays between school starting and Labor Day. Although the walk sometimes brings some grumbling (it is all downhill!), it's such fun to be out of class and hanging out with friends. Despite the unseasonably cold temperatures of our first trip, our hearty mountain kiddos all jumped into the pool. I'm not saying they stayed in long, as a raucous game of Uno was soon playing on the pool deck, but a trip to the pool requires swimming, regardless of how cold.

We will no longer be intimidated by hot temperatures since we now have air conditioning! We saved our Covid relief funds and were able to spend them on installing air conditioning throughout the school. This past week, we removed all the old window air conditioning units and installed glass in the panes once again. This, coupled with a complete repainting of the office, has our school standing very tall indeed. Our students are a major point of pride for all of us at Alta-Dutch Flat School and we strive to make the building a reflection of the pride we all feel for our community school. Here's to a fantastic school year for all!



**PLEASE**  
**SLOW**  
**DOWN**



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Views expressed in letters, guest opinion pieces and other contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the Dutch Flat Community Center, or its Board.

This newspaper is published quarterly and distributed to Dutch Flat Community Center members and to residents of the Center’s service area from Gold Run to Emigrant Gap in Placer County, California.

We welcome contributions from readers. Submission deadline for the next issue:

December 10, 2024.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Attic: Thursdays, 10 am - 1 pm.

Dutch Flat Community Center Board of Directors Meeting: 2nd Mondays, 6:00 pm. Location varies. Contact Laura Glassco, 916-778-8308.

Dutch Flat Community Center Potluck: 3rd Thursdays. 6:00 pm. Bring a place setting, your own drink, and a dish to share. July and August at the Dutch Flat Pool.

Dutch Flat Seventh Day Adventist: Community Worship Service, Wednesday, 6:30 pm and Saturday, 3:30 pm. 936 Stockton Street. Contact 706-633-8789.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Pancake Breakfast: 2nd Saturdays, 8:00 am -10:00 am.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Arts & Crafts: Thursdays, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. All are welcome. Learn something new!

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church: Worship Service, Sundays, 11:00 am. Fellowship lunch following service. Contact: 916-847-8477.

Golden Drift Historical Society Board Meeting: 1st Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December, 7 pm. Golden Drift Museum, Main Street. Contact Sarah Fugate, 530-210-5085.

Pioneer Union Church, Gold Run: Worship Service, Sundays, 10 am.

Placer County Library Mobile Service: See Page 5.

Sierra First Baptist Church, Alta: Worship Service, Sundays, 11 am. 33990 Alta Bonny Nook Rd., Alta. Contact 530-389-2168.

Sierra First Baptist Church Bible Study: Mondays, 8:30 am,

Sierra First Baptist Church Community Lunch: Mondays, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Free.

Sierra First Baptist Church Food Pantry: Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm.

A message from the DFCC President

By Laura Glassco

Our July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration was wonderful. So many festive cars, floats and participants in our historic parade! A big shout out to Deb Harris and her team of volunteers for leading the Dutch Flat Community Center’s “Dining Under The Stars”. The food was delicious, the band exceptional and the decorations made this fundraiser a spectacular event!



Chinese American stilt walkers in the 4th of July parade

Yes, that’s our Community Center shining in all its wonderful paint! After months of preparation to take off all the chipped and peeling paint, a coat of primer and two finish coats were applied. Our contractor, Chris Warych, did a fabulous job! Our Board member, Bill Charles, led this project, which included a lot of his time to insure the job went smoothly. Thank you, Bill!

The Towle Bros. caboose received new steps and railing. Mike Bell made this happen and will be painting it a bright red very shortly. Many thanks to Mike!

The WES, once again under Shelley Willsmore’s leadership, produced one of our best revenues to date. Her team of volunteers worked around



Mike Bell and Deb Harris, volunteers extraordinaire, “Dining Under the Stars”

the clock to ensure this event was a magnificent success. Many thanks to all who donated their time, goods, salads and love to this annual fundraiser!

Our insurance for the year went up a total 31%. If we didn’t hold such events like the WES, Spring Fling, 4<sup>th</sup> of July event and Oktoberfest, we would not be able to cover this expense. Thanks to all of you for attending and volunteering to ensure that these events are memorable and successful!

Here’s what’s coming up this Fall:

October 5	1-5 pm	Oktoberfest-Food, beverages and music
October 17	6 pm	Potluck-Elect DFCC Board of Directors
October 31	6-8 pm	Halloween-Games, prizes and food
November 21	6 pm	Potluck-Turkey provided by DFCC Board
November 29	5 pm	Community Tree Lighting and Light Parade
December 19	6 pm	Potluck-Turkey and Ham provided by DFCC Board

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# Welcome Home

By Diane Star

My father, Frank Wiesler, was a bomber pilot with the Army Air Corps in World War II. After 41 missions over Europe, he returned to the USA for a 20 day leave in his hometown in Hawley, Minnesota. The Army Air Corps required 40 missions and he volunteered for one more: the low level attack of the Ploesti refinery complex in Romania. This was the only major air raid over Europe where more died in the air than on the ground. After the raid, only 33 of the 177 B-24s were fit for service, 53 were destroyed and many others were damaged beyond repair.

Back in his hometown on leave he was interviewed by the local newspaper and the following article was published in December of 1943. After his leave, he was posted to California where he was a test pilot at McClellan Field in Sacramento. This is what was published. Perhaps due to wartime censorship, poor reporting and things that were best left out in 1943, not all of this is completely accurate.

## HAWLEY FLIER SKIMS OVER PLOESTI FIELDS; SKIPPED BOMBER ON FIRST ROME RAID

By Stanley E. Cowan

In raids on enemy-held airfields all over Sicily, half a dozen or more attacks on Messina, where only Friday Allied forces struck against the Italian mainland; participating in the first mass raid on Rome and skipping the only one of eight ships in his group that came back from the devastating blasting of the Ploesti oilfields of Romania — these are only some of the experiences of a 22 year old Hawley Minn., bomber pilot.

Yes, First Lieutenant Francis E. Wiesler is glad to be home. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter

Wiesler of Hawley, he is approaching the end of a 20 day leave which began when he landed in New York after a 40 hour flight from Cairo, Egypt.

From combat flying, in which he ran up more than 350 hours on actual missions, he hopes to begin a more peaceful occupation—piloting experimental ships on the west coast.

Lieutenant Wiesler laconically related more hair-raising incidents in a few minutes than we had heard from anyone in the war so far.

“It was really quite enjoyable” he smiled. “A few of the fellows had a bad time of it, but most of them take it as a matter of course.”

You’d think, however, that the hair on the heads of his and other young members of the Vulgar Virgin” —a name chosen by the navigator— would have turned white in on incident he told about.

The Vulgar Virgin and its crew were featured by Life Magazine and the news reels. It was on this ship, in one of the trips to Messina, that a huge bomb failed to drop,

and when the second load was dropped, an upper bomb was stopped by the lower one in the bomb bay.

And those were delayed action bombs. But the bombardier, Lieutenant Robert N. Austin of Campbell, N.Y. disobeyed his orders not to attempt to “de-fuse” the bombs — too many had exploded when the fuses were agitated. With the minutes ticking away and with the lives of himself and the crew hanging in the balance, Austin gingerly unscrewed the fuze and made the bomb harmless. The crew hoisted the harmless bomb into the rack.

Lieutenant Wiesler wasn’t at the controls of the Vulgar Virgin when it flew to the Ploesti oilfields. Crews of most ships had been shifted so only men with extensive experience would be on that dangerous flight of 2,400 miles round trip.

It was a kind of providence, so far as Lieutenant Wiesler was concerned, that brought about the change. For the Vulgar Virgin was among the 55 bombers reported missing after Hitler’s important oil supplies went up in smoke.

Wiesler was pilot on the second wave that swept over the oilfields. In his bomb rack were delayed action busters that were set to go off 45 seconds after they left the ship.

The Liberators skimmed the ground as they swept toward their target. And skim the ground they did for some of the ships had corn stalks stuck in their bomb bays when they returned to their bases.

Just as they were approaching his target—each ship had its specific mark to shoot at— one of the right motors conked out. An auxiliary motor inside the plane to “feather” the propeller (turn it with its blades at right angles to the ship to reduce resistance) also failed. This slowed the plane. If those 45-second bombs had been dropped on the target they might have blown up the ships coming in behind.

So, Lieutenant Wiesler swung the ship toward some hills where the bombs were jettisoned. A short time later the other right motor gave out. He couldn’t gain altitude to cross the mountains with only two motors so he cut through a pass (the trees were only 10 feet on either side of the wings) and finally brought the ship to the island of Cyprus where he landed at night. The only damage was to nearly burn out the brakes.

“All we could see was smoke” Lieutenant Wiesler said as he recalled glancing back at the target. “It covered the entire area.”

It was on another trip, on which he and the co-pilot, Lieut. W. C. Taylor of Ontario Calif, won the

Distinguished Flying Cross and the members of the crew won citations. The were bound for Salonika, Greece. Five miles from the target, one of the motors quit. They lost altitude. But with only three motors operating, the ship led the formation into the attack, 1,000 lower than planned. The bombs were dropped and they started the

return journey. About halfway back another motor gave out. They flew nearly two hours on two motors.

And to make matters worse, the bomber formation was attacked by pursuit ships. His plane got two and the formation accounted for 17 enemy fighters.

In the Rome attack Lieutenant Wiesler’s ship was in the second wave of American bombers and his target was the railroad marshaling yards, upon which bombs were squarely dropped.

Lieutenant Wiesler said it was virtually impossible to hit Vatican City while aiming at the railroad yards. The Vatican, he said, is four or five miles away.

His bomber squadron, said the Lieutenant, was based on the Libyan desert, where the dust and sand are so thick when the planes take off that the pilots behind the first group can’t see where they are going.

Lieutenant Wiesler enlisted at Marsh Field, Calif., in January, 1942. He received his preliminary training in California and received his wings at Victorville. He later was stationed at Pueblo, Colo., in New Mexico and Topeka, Kan. He went overseas in February, 1943, and had been stationed in Libya since.

One thing he will not forget about his experiences is the crew of the Vulgar Virgin. The ten men had gone overseas together. They had bunked together in tents on the desert. They had depended upon one another for their safety during bombing missions. They all flew to the Ploesti oilfields -in different ships- but Lieutenant Wiesler was the only one to return.

-The above article was brought to this office by Charley C. Stevens. Lieutenant Wiesler is a son of a cousin of Mr. Stevens. (End of newspaper article)

Postscript:

While the Vulgar Virgin was lost in the Ploesti raid, at least some of the crew survived and spent the rest of the war as POWs in Romania. Frank left the service as a Captain and his co-pilot, Wally Taylor, was best man at his wedding.

Leaving Ploesti Frank’s plane was intercepted over Bulgaria by two German fighters, ME110’s. Number 4 engine was dead and number 3 engine was smoking. His tail gunner managed to disable the lead fighter and Frank made it into a cloud and escaped. After the war the lead fighter pilot, a veteran of 60 air battles, was interviewed by a historian, and was quoted as saying “The American pilot was resourceful”. Frank wrote “this was a close call, the cloud saved us”.



Frank Wiesler

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## Where have all the squirrels gone?

By Annette Rodgers Purther

There are five species of squirrels in California: Western Gray, Eastern Gray, Eastern Fox, Douglas, and Humboldt’s Flying.

Of the two similar species in California, here in Alta we have mostly, if not all, Western Gray; the Eastern Gray is not native and is in competition with the Western Gray for territory and is winning. I am not positive of their actual geographic line so there are probably a few or more Eastern Grays between Colfax and Blue Canyon.

In 2023, Washington State added the Western Gray to the endangered species list. The squirrels were listed as threatened in the state in 1993. The recovery efforts did not work out as they had hoped by implementing guidelines on small and large landowners, so in 2023, Washington state’s DF&W put the Western Gray on the endangered list.

The Western Gray looks similar to the Eastern Gray, but their personalities are different. The Western Gray species are typically shy and will run up a tree when disturbed. Once there, they give a hoarse chirping sound at the intruder, along with tail flicking and foot-stomping; thus, they are also known as “The Forest Thumper”. London, England found them so appealing that in the early 1900’s they had them shipped over to add to their city parks, thrilling the Londoners.

The reddish, non-native Eastern Gray and Eastern Fox squirrels were brought to California in the early 1900’s and have been easily adapting to suburbs and cities since. In our area, we see the Eastern Gray, which is more comfortable around people, the squirrel we see darting across power lines and making leaps and somersaults to get to our bird feeders.

In California, Western Grays face several threats that have affected their population. The more aggressive and non-native Eastern Gray and Eastern Fox squirrels have been extremely detrimental.

The Western Gray has a limited range and can only be found on the west coast and parts of Mexico. The Western Gray has had to retreat farther and farther back into remote mountain habitats where competition is not so strong. These squirrels love living in the forest and are found at elevations up to 8,200 feet. You may see this species referred to as the Silver-Gray, California Gray, Oregon Gray, Columbian Gray, or the Banner-tail, depending on location.



Photo by Annette Rodgers Purther

Western Gray, Alta, California

SO, WHICH SQUIRRELS DO YOU HAVE? I just recently became aware of the differences; even after working in rehab at our local rescue for many years.

Western Grays have one litter per season, whereas Eastern Grays have two.

Western Grays breeding takes place once a year, from December to June. Gestation period lasts for 43 days, yielding 3 - 5 young per litter. Western Grays have a long, bushy, white-edged tail, which helps the animal balance while jumping from tree to tree. The limbs are considerably large. During the winter months, the prominent ears are usually colored reddish-brown at the back. They have white under-parts and a salt-and-pepper to steel gray coloration on its back.

Eastern Grays commonly breed in late winter or early spring and then, again, in the middle of summer. Eastern Grays gestation period is about 44 days. After this gestation period, the squirrels produce approximately 2 to 6 young; sometimes even 8. Eastern Grays are a prolific and adaptable species, which now thrives here. These squirrels are not gray, but are actually a mixture of black, brown and white, having brown on their face, but, they are banded with whitish ends, which causes them to look grayish. Eastern Grays also come in dark brown to black in color.

WHY I AM WRITING THIS STORY? About two months ago, I began noticing my hinged peanut box, exclusively for squirrels, was not being touched or at least not often. I queried on Facebook and most agreed to noticing a decline in squirrel sightings, but, there were also a few who said they saw them as usual? So, what’s going on? Alta Facebookers mentioned there have been more rattle snakes this year which do eat squirrels, but I would guess they eat more Ground Squirrels because they are on the

ground mostly.

So, this lack of squirrels got me interested enough to investigate, which led me to read about MASTING or MAST SEEDING; Trees that produce mast, like oaks, spruces, maples, ash and pines, have developed a clever strategy for dealing with this. Instead of producing mast every year, they produce it at irregular intervals, withholding production for several years and then producing a massive abundance of seed. This method allows trees to “starve” the predators of their seed for several years, lowering their populations, and then overwhelm them with more mast than they can eat, ensuring the ability of their seeds to repopulate the species.

Mast years normally happen every 3 to 5 years and the crop following a mast year is unusually low. Weather seems to be highly involved with a bumper crop as we all know when blossoms get a quick freeze in spring; that pretty much dictates not a mast year. What is important to remember about seed/fruit production is that it affects both wildlife and humans; a good thought to ponder.

So, squirrel predators and masting are definite reasons for a decline in squirrel population, along with disease and over hunting. A disease called Notoedric Mange, caused by mites, can be a huge problem for these squirrels and cause many deaths. As long as I have lived in Alta, I have only seen a couple of squirrels with mange or something that was on their heads. They came to my feeders daily and I watched them heal, so probably having good nutrition and a good immune system helped them overcome?

If last year, 2023, was a “Mast” year it would make sense that this year 2024 would be slim pickings. Whatever the causes, masting has consequences that flow up and down the food chain.

Lastly, hunting squirrels should not be free of concern for the population being hunted. After reading the above about masting, I hope hunters consider and research before hunting. Western Grays can only be hunted during hunting season, with a valid hunting license, and only 4 per day.

In conclusion: I don’t know why we aren’t seeing many squirrels, especially our Western Grays. It is odd that some of us are seeing squirrels while others don’t. I hope we now take time to reflect on how everything in nature works together for the good of all. There’s not one part or animal that isn’t an important piece of the puzzle.



Dawn M. Anderson, D.D.S.

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# A message from the WES Coordinator

By Shelley Willsmore

Though the year may not be exact, it is believed that in 1968, Eleanor Bridges, along with other community members, kicked off the first White Elephant Sale in her driveway. It was a neighborhood yard sale to benefit the Dutch Flat Schoolhouse and Community Club. Could they have imagined how that small yard sale became the four-day event that we just experienced in 2024? I remember fondly so many of those great ladies, and there must have been gents involved too, because just as it is today the manpower that the husbands and other men provide is essential to the White Elephant Sale.



This annual event would not be possible without the time, talent and treasures that abound in this amazing community. Our volunteers have given many hours of their Summer to sort, price and display the treasures that were generously donated to the Center, all to maintain our historic schoolhouse, a treasure in itself. For the first time, the sale was extended for a second weekend. This increased the work involved, but also many more happy faces were seen walking away with their bargains.

Community members donated the most scrumptious salads and, along with Bob Pfister's bread, a nice salad lunch was served the first weekend. My neighbor, Jennifer, who loves to bake, donated an assortment of baked goods to rival any bakery. Anyone fortunate enough to buy a chocolate salted caramel or white elephant cookie can attest to that. There were rice crispy treats and assorted muffins and she also made pulled pork for sandwiches the second weekend of the sale. It's this kind of community generosity and energy that makes this event so special and provides the much needed funding to maintain our Community Center. The White Elephant Sale is a unique event in a unique community.

I want to extend my appreciation to all who participated: those who donated, those who volunteered their time to set up and work the sale, those who purchased, those who just came to see and enjoy their neighbors, as well as those who could not make it but hold Dutch Flat dear in their hearts.

**A BIG THANK YOU!**

# Elephant Stampede

By Geri Lennon

Labor Day weekend annually is the harbinger of summer's end. Though temps remain high, except for rare rain outbursts, the general feeling is of "The Last Hoorah" is a bit nostalgic. For the volunteers of Dutch Flat, Gold Run and Alta, however, it is a welcomed celebration of a labor of love that begins far in advance of September's White Elephant Sale. But let's visit history. More than fifty years ago, the ruling matriarchs of Dutch Flat started a bake sale. Year after year, it grew like Topsy. Today, it is the largest fundraiser of the entire year.

Months of preparations go into this weekend extravaganza. Everything, repeat, EVERYTHING is donated including gourmet salads to keep the crowd fed. First day lines begin an hour early and stretch around the block. People come from far and near, and even across state lines. Families arrive and for two days the small town of Dutch Flat appears to burst with a hive of activity. Attendees find a well-oiled organization of goods ranging from collectors' items of paintings, tea sets, toys and wonderful long forgotten goodies of great value artfully displayed in the Community Center room both upstairs and downstairs as well as a magical annex outside that bursts with furniture, tents, tools, and outdoor items. One must not forget Roxanne's caboose of fabulous plants and flowers! Sheer magic! But most attendees have no clue just how much dedicated work is placed in offering this weekend of donations for fund raising. It takes hauling stored items from the basement, receiving and sorting of donated clothes, kitchen items, books, Christmas and holiday decorations, fine linens, crockery and china...the list is endless. Exhaustion runs high as days turn to weeks in the rush to complete by opening day. Will it be a success? Will there be enough volunteers and helpers? Is it worth the effort? **YOU BETCHA!!!!** Funds are raised for all the necessities that might arise in the next year.....most



Photo by Laura Glassco

**Sullivan and Greyson Frantz**

important is paying the increasingly large insurance bill. We all are familiar with the rising of insurance fees. This one is huge and yet it enables the community to remain a close community of friends and neighbors, and families. THIS requires community effort and the Elephant starts trumpeting in late July. This year the sale was extended to a second weekend for those who couldn't make the first round or decided on last minute purchases that are discounted on the final day. Long after the doors are closed, volunteers still remain to clear it all for yet another year. A huge thank you goes out to every volunteer and helper who tirelessly and joyfully made this White Elephant bellow with success! Thousands were raised and the community center lives on. HOORAY! We could not have done it without every one of you. Thank you with all our hearts and thanks to all who attended and scored unspeakably fabulous goodies. Last but definitely not least, thanks to the donors of incredibly delicious salads to feed the hungry masses. Yep, it takes imagination, energy, and wonderful folks.... It takes a village...but in truth it takes THREE. Thank you one and all.

Placer County Library Visiting

**Dutch Flat Community Center**

**Thursday**  
11:30 am - 12:30 pm

September 5 & 19  
October 3, 17, & 31  
November 14  
December 12

**Book Club at Dutch Flat Community Center**

September 19 - Moloka'i by Alan Brennert  
October 17 - The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett  
November 14 - Inheritance by Dani Shapiro  
December 12 - The Christmas Train by David Baldacci

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By Debby McClatchy



Johnson’s Ranch

The first miners arriving in California in 1848 had a choice of four destinations, Sutter’s Fort, Sinclair’s, Johnson’s, and Sigard’s Ranches. While the Fort eventually welcomed most of the travelers, Johnson’s Ranch was usually their first stop to rest and resupply after descending the tortuous western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Located on a wide area near the Bear River, it offered grasses for the livestock and a shallow place to ford the river.

In 1844, a Mexican named Don Pablo Guitteirez, while working for John Sutter, obtained a grant of five leagues of land near the Bear River. He and a friend, John Bidwell, initially found gold in the river, but later explorations were unsuccessful, so they let it go. A year later Guitteirez was hanged as a spy during an uprising against the Mexican governor, and William Johnson and Sebastian Kerger purchased the land.

A trickle of immigrants from the East started to arrive and needed supplies. A five year old boy, Ben Bonney, from a train led by Greenwood and Ide, found shiny pebbles in the river. A dentist, Dr. Gildea, confirmed that they were gold, but kept it to himself. Planning to return later to prospect, Dr. Gildea unfortunately died of natural causes before he could do so. His “secret” died with him and a gold rush was once more averted.

The first Donner Party rescue effort, “The Snowshoe Rescue”, mounted by the Party itself, arrived at Johnson’s Ranch in January of 1847. They had been reduced from fifteen to seven souls. News of the Party stranded

More Gold Rush Trivia

at the Lake was widely circulated. All the rescue efforts stopped first at the Ranch to recover. One of the survivors, Mary Murphy, married William Johnson that year when she was fifteen. They bonded over a mutual love for horses.

Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson loved his liquor and the marriage was soon annulled. Mary’s second marriage, also in 1847, to Charles Covillaud, was successful. He started a settlement and named it after her, as Marysville.

William Johnson later soon sold the Ranch for \$9000. Finding it abandoned in 1852, he filed a claim to retake the land, but was unsuccessful. He left for Hawaii and remained there until his death.



More About James Marshall

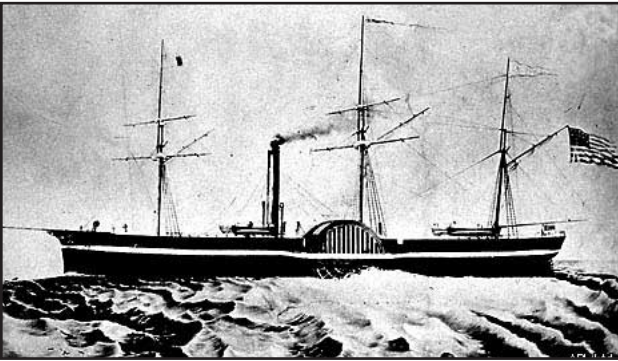
James Marshall, who found that gold nugget in Sutter’s mill race in Coloma, was born in New Jersey. The only son of a carpenter, he apprenticed to his father, and assumed he would always work in the family business, one day to inherit it. Unfortunately his father died when James was in his early twenties, leaving massive debt.

Marshall left for Missouri, where he established a homestead claim.

Again luck was against him and a bout of malaria left him too weak to farm. A doctor recommended he move further west. Marshall joined a wagon train to Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Again, he found the cold, damp weather too unhealthy, so he headed down to California.

He landed at Sutter’s Fort and was hired on as a carpenter. In late 1847 Sutter sent him to Coloma to build a sawmill and the rest is history.



Sailing to California

Most companies of men brought too many goods with them on the voyage. It was easy on the ship, but once there, everything had to be transported, so usually most was sold in San Francisco. For example, a group of twelve men, named “The Ganargwa Mining Company” based in Newark, Wayne County, New York, was bound for the “Dry Diggins” near Auburn, arriving there in August of 1849. Coming through Panama they managed to bring it all to San Francisco, but had to leave quite a bit behind. Their bright steel tomahawks, Bowie knives, and generous amounts of guns called “Pepperboxes”, plus clothes and tarps and fishing gear, made it to Auburn, but a fancy machine to make five and ten dollar gold pieces from all that gold remained behind. Plus a “washing machine” the size of a small room.

More wealthy companies just bought their own ship and sold off extra berths to help with expenses. One such ship, the Edalina, from New Granada, was bought for \$1500 and refitted for another \$4000. The owners hired a captain and took on twenty-five additional passengers. Being Americans, they hoisted the stars and stripes. Needing to replenish their water supply, the overcrowded vessel sailed into a Nicaraguan port controlled by the British. They were immediately seized and condemned. Amazingly, all on board, left to their own devices, made it to the California gold fields.



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# Howard Berger

By Karsten Mintline



Howard Peter Berger passed away peacefully in Auburn, CA on August 6, 2024, at the age of 96. He was born in Lewiston, Idaho, the son of Howard J. and Thora D. (Wang) Berger. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 63 years, Mary, and a son, Scott. He is survived by his children Patricia, Rosemary, Michael, Kelly, and Karsten, a dozen grandchildren, and numerous great- and great-great grandchildren.

Howard was a quiet family man, but when prompted with questions from them, he recalled his Lewiston childhood fondly, including stories about family trips to Seattle to visit aunts and grandparents, tennis with his younger brother, and fishing and camping along the Clearwater River. His parents taught him bridge, which he mastered and then taught his children in turn, enjoying the game throughout his long life.

Howard graduated from the University of Idaho, Moscow in Education. At the age of 22, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Korean Conflict where he was awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts for his bravery and heroism.

After discharge he became a successful science and math teacher in Menlo Park School District California. For nearly 30 years he bravely taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students the nuances of the scientific method, as well as introducing them to computers (a groundbreaking subject at the time), tide pools, geology, astronomy, physics, and chemistry. While teaching, he earned a Masters’ Degree from San Jose State.

Howard married Mary (and bravely, her four children ages 11 to 4) in 1958 and set up housekeeping in San Jose California. Two years later Kelly was born, followed by Karsten two years after that. To maintain their brood, Howard worked second jobs, including several summer seasons as a ranger at Grand Canyon. Howard and his family traveled throughout the country extensively.

Howard and Mary retired in the mid-1980s to Dutch Flat, CA. They continued to travel, garden and spent many afternoons reading and entertaining family. Howard was an avid fan of the San Francisco Giants and the Golden State Warriors. They moved once more to Aptos in Santa Cruz County in 2012, where Mary passed away in 2021. Howard had moved back to Placer County very recently before his death.

Throughout his adult life, Howard was deeply focused on his family. He gave them his quiet strength, his perseverance, and his well-tempered, dry sense of humor. He shared with them his love of learning. His children remember his calm and steady demeanor, his gentle kindness, his leadership in the family without being a disciplinarian. They fondly recall all the things they did together from the time they were children to recent times when they were all seniors together. Mary always called him her rock, and he was absolutely devoted to her, and even as the infirmities of old age intruded, he loved every one in his family bravely and unconditionally. He will be profoundly missed.

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Jeri Wohn

# Dutch Flat Water System Update

By Ernie Bullard

In March 2024, work resumed on completing the water project to replace water main pipelines and customer water meters, and to upgrade the storage tank site with automatic altitude valves and mixers.

Construction of the new water main pipeline was completed in 2023, and only customer water meter replacements and storage tank site upgrades were left to finish in 2024. In April, the remaining new meters were connected on Main Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. By the end of April, the work was completed and water services were switched over to the PCWA waterline. However, that new waterline was still being filled with water from the Dutch Flat water treatment plant.

In May, the project slowed while waiting for delivery of the automated Tesco SCADA system equipment. After numerous delays, the Tesco equipment was finally delivered in mid-June, and after three weeks of testing and integration, the equipment became operational.

The final tie-in to connect Dutch Flat to the PCWA water system was finally accomplished on Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024. Dutch Flat water customers are now being served by a new state-of-the-art system which should last 100 years.

For a little history about Dutch Flat Water: The town of Dutch Flat was founded in 1851. The Dutch Flat Water Works were built in 1859 by the Cedar Creek Water Company that provided water for hydraulic mining in the area. In 1865, Isaac Coffin bought and operated the water works until his death in 1903. The system was eventually sold to the Nichols Bank in 1911 and was operated by Arthur Nichols until his death in 1966. In his will, Nichols left the water system to the Dutch Flat community. However, a judge ruled that the system could not be left in perpetuity to the town. So, Wells Fargo Bank, the Nichol’s estate manager, operated the system with benign neglect for two years. The community eventually became concerned with how the system was operated so Matt Bailey and a number of other community members formed a non-profit mutual corporation and bought the system from the Nichol’s estate. Thus, the Dutch Flat Mutual Water Company (DFMWC) came into existence in 1968 and has served the community for 56 years. Most of the management, operation, and labor has been performed by volunteers like Charlie Bridges and others in the community.

After many years of dealing with costly equipment upgrades and increasingly stricter water quality regulations, DFMWC requested hook-up to PCWA in 1996. At that time, PCWA could not provide service to Dutch Flat, because of needed upgrades to their Alta Water Plant. Eventually in 2004, DFMWC was able to get a low interest loan from the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to build the 150,000 gallon steel storage tank, which helped with operation of the water system. Finally in 2018, DFMWC was able to secure a \$5 million grant from SWRCB to replace all of the water mains and meters in Dutch Flat and consolidate with PCWA.

We are now fortunate to be provided with top quality water service via a modern high-tech system, and a water system managed by a skilled, well-resourced, local company.

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# Restoring a Historic Church

By Laura Glassco



Photo courtesy of Dutch Flat United Methodist Church

## Dutch Flat United Methodist Church

In Dutch Flat’s history there have been many buildings that provided a place for worship. The last remaining church building is the United Methodist Church on Stockton Street, which has been in continuous use since it was built in 1861.

In 1857, Reverend R.B. Schofield was appointed by the Methodist Conference in Sacramento to preach in Dutch Flat. In 1858, Reverend Schofield purchased the site with his own funds. Construction of the church began the next year. Timbers were cut from Cemetery Hill and hand-hewn for the foundation. The building was completed in 1861.

Pews were purchased from New England and brought by ship around Cape Horn. The church bell was purchased in 1864 for \$300 and its tower was erected in 1866. Pulpit chairs were purchased in 1896.

As you would expect, this historic building is in need of significant restoration. Sarah Fugate, President of the Golden Drift Historical Society and Laura Glassco, President of the Dutch Flat Community Center, representing our community, have been in contact with Betty Weiser, Chair of the Great Northern District Union of the California Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church, and George Beckman, lay minister, to discuss how to raise the necessary funds to restore this wonderful landmark.

So many people have asked what is being done to restore this church? We are just in the beginning of this effort and want to encourage anyone to join this project. Please contact Betty Weiser @ [bbweiser@aol.com](mailto:bbweiser@aol.com) or Sarah Fugate @ [sarahjsund@aol.com](mailto:sarahjsund@aol.com) if you would like to donate or get involved.

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# Two-Eyed Seeing

By Mia Monroe

Since time immemorial, monarch butterflies have arrived in the highlands of central Mexico in early November, welcomed as the returning souls of their ancestors. Dias de los Muertos celebrations are colorful rituals to honor past family members and include orange flowers, sugar skulls and powerful altars to recall the dead. We can see vestiges of this in today's Halloween!



Maybe the proximity to the Dutch Flat cemeteries, or my passion for monarch butterflies, has me thinking about the cosmology of the Mexican culture as a powerful way to remember the past, recall extinct species and to celebrate the turning of the seasons. This also seems like an apropos time to share a new technique, Two-Eyed Seeing. This is a framework that Elder Dr. Albert Marshall described as “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledge and ways of knowing, and to then use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”

This autumn may we all have bounty, watch the birds, and enjoy the abundant dogwood fruit, as we crunch the colorful fall leaves with each step!

# Upcoming Community Events



Happy Fall



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Photo by Alex Pierce  
Milky Way over Dutch Flat



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Photo by Sarah Fugate  
Karen Charles on Halloween



Photo by Sarah Fugate  
Kim and Laura Glassco on Halloween