

➤ 1858 - 1958 - 2008 ➤

# HAY DAYS

## Are Here Again!

DANVILLE  
WEEKLY  
DANVILLE  
SESQUICENTENNIAL  
KEEPSAKE  
EDITION!

KIWANIS CLUB  
OF SAN RAMON  
VALLEY

TOWN OF  
DANVILLE

MUSEUM OF THE  
SAN RAMON  
VALLEY

## HOORAY for Hay Days

Four days of fun celebrated  
Danville centennial in 1958

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

**O**ld Doc Ohlson was the type of veterinarian who would struggle in the mud with shears to sever the toenails of a 2,000-pound bull on a ranch one minute and the next find himself in his Danville office delicately trimming the petite nails of a canary.

Tom Ohlson was one of the town leaders in the 1950s—president of the Danville Chamber of Commerce and a charter member of the Danville Rotary—who were responsible for the first Hay Days 50 years ago, held to celebrate Danville's centennial.

At that time, Russel Glenn, owner of the Danville Hotel, was lobbying to make Danville look like an old Western town, and started a group called the Confederacy to make it happen. He refurbished the historic Danville Hotel and added the Danville territories behind it, including the large Victorian-styled restaurant and false-fronted little buildings that are on their last legs today and waiting for redevelopment.

Glenn thought the town's centennial in 1958 would be a perfect deadline for his movement to redo business facades downtown, with the slogan "modern convenience in old time leisure."

"Russel said, 'Let's have a celebration—we're 100 years old!'" recalled Ohlson recently at his hilltop home off El Pintado with his wife Rosemary. "We had a professional carnival for four days and at the end was the parade."

Residents dressed like their counterparts from 100

➤ Continued on page 15



Rosemary and Tom Ohlson don Old West garb for the first Hay Days in September 1958 to celebrate Danville's centennial.

COURTESY OHLSON FAMILY

## San Ramon Valley loves a parade

### Danville women brought Fourth of July festivities to town

**R**ed, white and blue are the order of the day as Danville and the Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley host an Independence Day Parade each year that draws tens of thousands.

The community first hosted a huge party 50 years ago, when town leaders celebrated Danville's centennial with four days of events, Sept. 4-7, they called Hay Days. It included a professional carnival as well as an old-timers bathing suit fashion show, a children's pet parade, a men's whiskers contest, the Coronation of Miss Pioneer Belle, a barbecue and a parade on the last day.

Hay Days continued to be held the next few years, but by 1962 some residents felt it should be more family oriented.

➤ Continued on page 5

# Congratulations Danville!

For an extraordinary 150 years of growth and development



## Rotary Clubs of the Valley



Rotary Club  
of  
ALAMO

Wednesday Noon  
Roundhill Country Club

Interact Club  
Monte Vista HS

**Building our Community**  
Music Festival  
SRVUSD Music Program  
Meals on Wheels  
Iraq Soldiers Packages  
Children's Easter Egg Hunt  
Tree Lighting

**Building a Better World**  
Wheelchairs - Mexico  
Eyeglasses - India  
Schools - Nigeria  
LN-4 Prosthetic Hands



Rotary Club  
of  
DANVILLE

Monday Noon  
Brass Door

Interact Club  
San Ramon Valley HS

**Building our Community**  
YMCA Building Fund  
Discovery Counseling Center  
Del Amigo High School  
Third Grade Dictionaries  
Athletic Awards  
Scholarships

**Building a Better World**  
Jaws of Life - Mexico  
Soccer Gear - Africa  
Childrens Shelter - Colombia  
LN-4 Hands - Jordan



Rotary Club  
of  
DANVILLE  
SYCAMORE VALLEY

Tuesday 7am  
Crow Canyon CC

Interact Club  
Dougherty Valley HS

**Building our Community**  
Blue Star Moms  
Camp Hope  
Contra Costa Clubhouse  
STAND for Veterans  
Senior Help Line  
Sentinels of Freedom

**Building a Better World**  
Wheelchairs - Mexico  
Eye Surgeries - India  
Mosquito Nets - Uganda  
LN-4 Hands



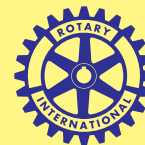
Rotary Club  
of  
SAN RAMON

Thursday Noon  
Crow Canyon CC

Interact Club  
California HS

**Building our Community**  
San Ramon Senior Center  
Cal Hi Music Program  
Wardrobe of Opportunity  
San Ramon Valley YMCA  
SRV Education Foundation  
American Heart Association

**Building a Better World**  
Polio Plus Eradication  
Helping Hands in Lithuania  
Brazilian School Equipment  
Prosthetic Hand Project



Rotary Club  
of  
SAN RAMON  
VALLEY

Wednesday 7pm  
Crow Canyon CCC

Interact Club  
California HS

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Valley Teen Idol  
Business Achievement  
Program  
One Warm Coat  
Youth Exchange  
Scholarships

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Clean Water - Mexico  
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# 'I remember Hay Days!'

## Historian recalls enthusiasm of Centennial celebration

by Virgie V. Jones

When I was asked for my remembrance of the Danville's Centennial Hay Days, it all came back like it was yesterday (though 50 years had passed).

The Hay Days started Sept. 4, 1958; it was in celebration of Danville's centennial year, and continued for four days (four years as well). And, it seemed everyone was enthusiastic and participated.

With the help of the four-page program, first day events were an Aquacade and a fashion show of Old Timers bathing suits at the San Ramon Valley High School. Second Day, Sept. 5, Kid's Day with a pet parade at Charlotte Middle School. Next day (third) was the Junior Horseman's Show at the Humphrey Ranch on Stone Valley Road. The Coronation of the Pioneer Belle—followed by a dance. The fourth and last of the Hay Days Celebration was the Centennial Parade on Hartz Avenue, the Old Timers Flag Raising Ceremony and end of the parade and a barbecued steak dinner. There was a carnival with rides set up all four days.

Fred Wilkens was general chairman and other chairmen were: Ray McCoy, parade; Vance Perry, carnival; Jack Weightman, queen contest; Don McNeilly, decorations and pet parade; Gen Bayley, publicity; Walter Xavier, grounds; Tom Ohlson, police; Tom Clarke, whiskerino; Carl Fiedler, barbecue; Ward Shannon, street dance and public address system; Mel Whalin and Dick Calhoun, finance; Jane Manske, Aquacade; Ed Azarian, local concessions; Mary Huenink, junior horsemen; and Bill Hockins, program.

We Joneses participated in all of it. We



Virgie V. Jones, in her home office in 2005, shows her book, "Remembering Alamo," one of three she has written on local history.

wore costumes for the entire four days. My husband, Al Jones, wore a cowboy outfit resembling "Cowboy Wild Bill Cody" or a "Southern Colonel." By day, I wore a pioneer dress and bonnet and at night I wore a black slinky, side-slitted, form fitting beaded gown complete with feather boa and fan and became a dance hall "cutie"!

Russel Glen of Danville Hotel fame started the whiskerino contest. My husband participated, for the event, but Russ never shaved his beard off.

Danville Hay Days continued for four years, but not to the extent of its first year in 1958.

In 1962, it was decided to do the San Ramon Valley Old-Fashioned Fourth of July ceremonies. Pat O'Nion of Alamo was general chairman for the first year (1962). Gen. William F. Dean of Berkeley was the guest speaker. For about 10 years thereafter, Virginia (Mrs. William) Deaton of Montair served as this function's capable chairman.

What fun it all was, and a family event. ■

*Most of this information was taken from my book, "Remembering Alamo... and Other Things Along the Way," 1975 and 2001.*

# Happy Birthday, Danville

Towns across the United States that share the name "Danville" have been sending congratulations to our town as we turn 150 years old.

"As one of the earliest towns to share your namesake, we are now in our 222nd year," wrote officials from Danville, Vt. They proudly stated their town has grown 35 percent in the last 50 years—to a population of 2,200.

The population of Danville, Calif., has also grown:

1940 - 1,225	1980 - 26,446
1960 - 3,585	1990 - 31,306
1970 - 16,218	2000 - 41,715

The wonderful thing about "our" Danville is how the growth has been accommodated, with the town being incorporated in 1982. As Danville, Calif., observes its sesquicentennial, residents have plenty to celebrate: Through careful planning, it has retained its small-town charm and its facilities offer enjoyment, education and enrichment.

Although Danville's early pioneers could no more envision today's Danville than we can imagine the town in the year 2158, it is still a place where people settle to make a good life for themselves and their families. Essays from third-graders (page 12) testify that they feel safe, love their schools and the downtown, and are happy they are living here with their families.

We want to thank Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley for choosing the Danville Weekly as the media sponsor to publish this Keepsake Edition. And thank you to the volunteers at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley for opening its archives to us and being so generous with information.

Happy birthday, Danville, from the Danville Weekly.

Publisher **Gina Channell-Allen**  
Editor **Dolores Fox Ciardelli**  
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**Danville**  
WEEKLY

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# Kiwanis

Of the San Ramon Valley

Alan Davis, President PO Box 223 Danville, CA 94526  
Telephone 925-785-5583 (O) 925-886-3910 (FAX) Email: president@kiwanis-srv.org

## A Letter from the President...

June 5, 2008

Dear San Ramon Valley Friends and Neighbors,

Each Independence Day we honor our great country and the freedoms we cherish. And, speaking of those freedoms, we punctuate our summers with trips to the beach or mountains, a backyard barbeque with friends and family, and of course, the Danville Fourth of July Parade.

For those of us in the San Ramon Valley Kiwanis, Independence Day is the pinnacle of a year of work, planning, and preparing for the annual Danville Fourth of July parade. This year's parade is special because it marks the town of Danville's sesquicentennial, and the Parade's fiftieth anniversary.

To commemorate these two significant dates, we have a two-day celebration planned. Thursday, July 3, downtown Danville (4:00-8:00pm), is an afternoon of carnival games, a pet parade, an old fashioned bathing suit contest, hay rides, live music, a Town of Danville community picnic and much more. And the best part is the event is completely free to the public. Friday, July 4, at 9:00am (an hour early this year) marks the start of our 50th anniversary 4th of July Parade. We sincerely hope you can join us for all of these events.

So how does a service club like Kiwanis stage a large event like a parade and these other events free to the public you may ask? We do it through the volunteer efforts of our members. Some Key facts about the San Ramon Valley Kiwanis:

- Our Club is over 50 Years old
- We have Donated over \$1 million and 10,000 community service hours to the community
- In the past eight years, we raised and granted nearly \$500,000 to various community groups
- Helped over 100-different non-profit community service organizations in the last five-years
- Gathered over 1,100-turkeys and over 45,000 pounds of food as part of the NBC11 John Farley Bay Area Turkey & Food Drive

In addition, some of our recent community service projects include:

- Benches in downtown Danville
- Local school repair
- Lafayette Girl Scout Camp repairs
- Regional park trail repair
- Shade structure at children's nursery, and
- We Run the annual Kiwanis Danville July 4th Parade

We wish you and your families the very best, and hope you too will support your town and community by joining us for the fabulous celebration on July 3 and 4, 2008.

Happy Independence Day,

Alan Davis  
President  
Kiwanis of the San Ramon Valley

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 OF HAY DAYS.**

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## Parade

Continued from page 1

"We were puritan mothers here watching the slightly inebriated parade and decided to clean up the act," recalled Liz DeChene, 81, who lives in the same house today that she and her husband Bob built in 1947. "Hay Days was rather a raunchy affair. The carnival was a complete sham, not a good place for kids to go."

What she and her friend Virginia Deaton really wanted was an event where families could celebrate our nation's birthday right at home in Danville.

"We had just finished the Korean War ... the town was full of patriotic veterans, and here we did not celebrate the Fourth of July," DeChene said. "Virginia and I were making spaghetti at a Cub Scout dinner one night and got to talking about it."

Since Danville was unincorporated then, the women tried to sell their idea to the Chamber of Commerce. They were shocked when one man asked, "Why should we celebrate the Fourth of July?" DeChene remembered. The women suggested perhaps the Chamber could at least pay the postage for correspondence to run the event but they were denied.

So they rallied their friends and families and put on a good old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration themselves.

"We started off with a format that was very patriotic and very homey," DeChene said.

The principal at San Ramon Valley High was happy to open the school grounds to the celebration, and all the clubs in town—the hospital guild, Scouts, swim team, women's club and more—put up booths with a penny pitch and other low-key games, and sold ice cream and Coca Cola under the trees. There was also a contest for decorated bicycles.

"Danville Rotary agreed to do a pancake breakfast,"

## 1958 Hay Days schedule

### Thursday, Sept. 4

7 p.m. ♦ Aquacade, Old-timers bathing suit fashion show, San Ramon Valley High School pool; Carnival, Charlotte Wood School (now the library on Front Street)

### Friday, Sept. 5

4 p.m. ♦ Kid's Day, children's pet parade at Charlotte Wood School, carnival

### Saturday, Sept. 6

1 p.m. ♦ Danville Junior Horsemen's Show, Humphrey Ranch, Stone Valley Road, Alamo

3 p.m. ♦ Whiskerino contest

8:30 p.m. ♦ Coronation of Miss Pioneer Belle, Charlotte Wood School

9 p.m. ♦ Street dance, Murray Peterson's orchestra, carnival

### Sunday, Sept. 7

1 p.m. ♦ Centennial parade, Hartz Ave., San Ramon Valley High School to Charlotte Wood School, followed by historical flag raising

3 p.m. ♦ Barbecue steak dinner, Charlotte Wood School, carnival

DeChene said. "Everybody just pitched in. The town was small and you could do these things."

A color guard presented the flag at a ceremony and Gen. William F. Dean, who recently had been released from a North Korean prison, was the speaker.

"Virginia and I had decided we were going to have fireworks if we had to buy them ourselves," DeChene said. "We were determined our kids not have to go anywhere else to see them."

She personally drove to Richmond to pick out fireworks and arrange for the person to set them off that night on the high school football field.

"When they delivered the fireworks, we put them into the boys shower in the gym," said DeChene. "I figured if something went wrong, we'd turn the showers on."

The Bank of America in Alamo was the biggest help with funding, she recalled. It kept a can for donations handy, and the manager urged all customers to give toward the community celebration.

On the Fourth, the event drew more and more people so Bob DeChene and Bill Deaton went home and got sawhorses and blocked off the road, Liz DeChene remembered.

The two husbands also collected money in a golden garbage can from people as they left the fireworks display when sated residents were ready to pay for their glorious Fourth.

"We counted dollar bills all night and, sure enough, we had paid for it," said DeChene.

After the first successful event, the Chamber of Commerce took ownership. The celebration came to include a parade, which the Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley took over in 1975.

"I suggested to the Kiwanis Club that the club take it over," recalled David Stegman, a longtime member of both the Kiwanis and the Chamber. "After convincing everybody it would be a good civic undertaking, I was chairman for about 12 years. It grew—and grew—and grew—until it is what it is today."

Now families plan their vacations around it. Friends have their favorite places to gather each year and enjoy the parade together. People were setting out their chairs earlier and earlier July 3 to reserve their spaces until the town in 2003 mandated no chairs before 6 p.m. Now some people draw chalk marks to hold their spots.

This year, the Fourth of July Parade, presented by Kiwanis and Heller Jewelers, begins at 9 a.m.—an hour earlier than usual due to the large number of entries and the heat. Kiwanis has asked each entry in the parade to have entertainment value to make it extra special. Rob Goldstein is parade chairman while David Romano and Nancy Bray are heading up the Hay Days celebration.

### Parade entries include:

- ♦ Cruisetones 1950's Band
- ♦ California Historical Artillery Society (mounted living history from 1840-1918)
- ♦ Chinese Lion Dance Team
- ♦ Concord Blue Devils (band and precision drill team)
- ♦ Precision Drill Ministries
- ♦ Wells Fargo Stagecoach
- ♦ Sycamore Lawn Mower Brigade
- ♦ Danville Weekly Marching Band

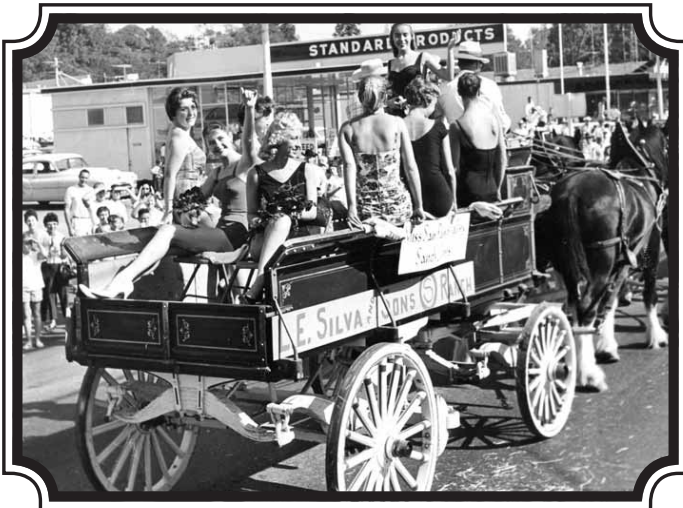
The fun continues back in San Ramon at 5 p.m. with a party in Central Park and a special 25th anniversary Fireworks Display at 9:35 p.m.

This year Kiwanis also is bringing back Hay Days, holding a huge community celebration July 3 with the help of the Town of Danville and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.

And Liz DeChene? She says today's Fourth of July Parade is appropriate for the town of today.

"Times change, and they had to change," she said. "I'm going up to Sonora for their Fourth of July," she added, with a laugh. "They have what we used to have."

—Dolores Fox Ciardelli



Everybody turned out in downtown Danville to enjoy the first Hay Days parade in 1958. The high school band marched, trucks were decorated, and Miss Pioneer Belle and her court were admired by all.

LES SPIES OAKLAND TRIBUNE (FROM VINTAGE DANVILLE)

# Danville Hay Days Sesquicentennial—2008

A collaboration among the Town of Danville, Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley and the Museum of the San Ramon Valley

**June 28 7 p.m.** ♦ Debut of "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories" by Beverly Lane and Laura Grinstead, photo editor Ralph Cozine, at the Library, 400 Front St.; \$25 per person. Hosted by volunteers from the Museum, the Town and the Library foundation. ♦ Food and drink underwritten by BlakeHunt Ventures, Castle Construction and BevMo!

**July 1-16** ♦ "Glimpses of the Past," a mini exhibit at the Museum featuring photographs, artifacts, a video of Hay Days parades, and two commemorative quilts (Danville's 125th and 150th anniversaries).

**July 1-2** ♦ "Vintage Danville" book is available at the museum; open 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (extended hours); authors Beverly Lane and Laura Grinstead will be there to sign and talk about the book. Volunteers from the Museum and the National Charity League will support these extended hours. Historic characters will be present to talk with visitors. ♦ New Old Town Walking Guide, co-sponsored by the Town and the Museum

**July 3** ♦ Hay Days events throughout Danville, beginning at 10 a.m. manned by volunteers from the Museum, National Charity League, Kiwanis, Town of Danville and Role Players Ensemble

**10 a.m.-7 p.m.** ♦ Museum open; "Vintage Danville" book sales and signing, exhibit

**5-7 p.m.** ♦ Josephine and Dan Inman (Dureen and Geoff Bishop) will visit with people. Dan (Geoff) will bring a 1/2 size pioneer wagon with tools and will also talk about Dan as a cooper (wheel and barrel-maker).

Historic characters visiting all over.

"Glimpses of the Past" exhibit (including video of Hay Days).

**4-8 p.m.** ♦ Farmers Market

**4-7 p.m.** ♦ Free barbeque at the Town Green, 400 Front St., hosted by the Town.

**4:30-7 p.m.** ♦ Hay rides and Branch Line train rides provided by volunteers from the Museum of the SRV, with tractor from Forest Home Farms

**Hay Days at the Railroad Avenue Parking Lot—events sponsored by Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley**

**5-8 p.m.** ♦ Kids Carnival Games (modern and old fashioned), musical entertainment, Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Social

**5:30 p.m.** ♦ Kids & Pets Costume Parade

**6 p.m.** ♦ Old Fashioned 1850s-1950s Bathing Suit Show

**7 p.m.** ♦ Horse Exhibition by the Diablo Arabian Horse Association

**7:45 p.m.** ♦ Coronation of Miss Pioneer Belle

**At Veteran's Hall on Hartz Avenue ♦ 8 p.m.** "Danville's Got Talent"—Role Players Ensemble Old Time Talent Show with Museum volunteers (nominal fee)

**July 4 9 a.m.** ♦ Parade in Danville, sponsored by Kiwanis and Town of Danville. The theme is Celebrating Hay Days, and the Grand Marshal is Roxanne Lindsay of the pioneer Wiedemann family.



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# 'Vintage Danville'

## Sesquicentennial book portrays last 150 years in Danville

by Dolores Fox Ciardelli

Let's write a book!  
The Town of Danville decided early on that it wanted to produce a history book in honor of its 150th birthday this year. "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories" will be hot off the presses at its debut June 28 at the library, the first chance for folks to see it plus get it signed by authors Beverly Lane and Laura Grinstead.

"It's really a nice combination of coffee table book and rich history of the Valley," said Mayor Candace Andersen.

"It combines Beverly's historical background, her knowledge of Valley history, and the wonderful photo archives that she and Ralph (Cozine) have put together."

Donning Co. Publishers were in the area in 2006 talking up book ideas with historical societies and museums.

"They were seeing if we wanted to do something for Danville turning 25," said Lane, who is curator of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Danville was incorporated in 1982 and Lane was elected to its first Town Council.

But Lane had a better idea. She knew the Kiwanis of San Ramon Valley and the museum were planning a huge Hay Days and 150th birthday celebration for Danville in July 2008 and thought a book could tie in beautifully with that.

She mentioned it to Andersen, who was in

line to be mayor for the sesquicentennial. "I said, 'This is a fantastic idea, we should pursue it,'" recalled Andersen.

She got the particulars from the publisher and presented them to the other council members and Town Manager Joe Calabrigo.

Lane seemed like the perfect choice to author the new book. She and Cozine had found historic photographs and written captions for "San Ramon Valley: Alamo, Danville, and San Ramon" for the Museum in 2005, part of the Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing.

But Lane already found herself overextended; in addition to her museum work, which includes a historic column for the Danville Weekly, she is an elected director of East Bay Regional Park District.

"I said I could do it if we had another writer," recalled Lane.

She also saw the value of bringing a new perspective to the project.

Museum docent Betty Joyce suggested her daughter, Laura Grinstead, who's lived in Danville almost 20 years, and whose three children are pretty much raised. Grinstead has a journalism degree from University of Southern California and works in corporate communications.

"I thought it sounded intriguing," said Grinstead.

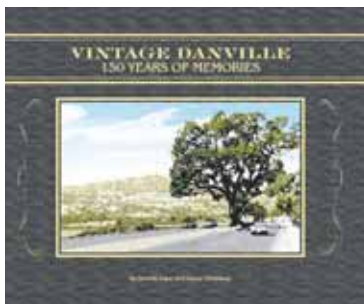
"With my three kids in the school programs, we would come down and see every new exhibit."

She also knew that Lane would be a good mentor.

"She embraced me as a partner," Grinstead said.

"This way we had two different generations of writers and two different generations of Danville," noted Lane.

The call went out to residents of the San Ramon Valley to loan old photographs



Beverly Lane (left) and Laura Grinstead go over proofs for the book they co-authored, "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories."

DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI

### 150 years in a package

**What:** "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories" debut

**Special:** Buy the book (\$35); meet the authors; meet "historic characters"; Sesquicentennial Quilt by artist Cyndy Rymers on display

**When:** 7 p.m., Saturday, June 28

**Where:** Danville library, 400 Front St.

**Cost:** \$25 donation benefits the Danville Library Foundation

and share their stories, and "Team Vintage Danville" combed the archives of local museums and newspapers.

"Because we were getting so much volunteer support from the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, the town decided we would front the cost of the book," said Andersen. "After we get repaid, profits will go to the Museum. It will also be the primary place selling the book."

Three thousands copied are being printed and the book sells for \$35.

"We wanted to set a price that would make it affordable," said Andersen.

Team Vintage Danville included Ralph Cozine, who produced the photographs; and Vic Georgiou, who proofed and advised on the text. They also helped proofread as did Tom Grinstead, Marilyn Cozine and Jim Lane. The main photographers—besides all those unknowns whose olden day pictures and snapshots made it into the book—were Jeff Mason, Doug Aiten, Ralph Cozine, Georgiou, Bob Russel and Stacey Hartmann, plus some by Bill Hockins.

"We feel we have created a keepsake that every Danville resident will want in their personal library," said Grinstead.

The book will be available July 1 at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, at the corner of Railroad and Prospect avenues in Danville, as well as at the launch June 28. It may also be ordered on the town Web site: [www.ci.danville.ca.us](http://www.ci.danville.ca.us).

Grinstead said she learned Danville does indeed offer a fairytale life—community, core values and beliefs woven into the fabric of the town life.

"I learned that all of this is rooted in the integrity and virtue of the people in Danville history," she said. "Early pioneers ... cared for each other in all circumstances, demonstrating loyalty and a generous spirit." ■

## The Danville Song

Lyrics by Stan Wharton  
(to the tune of Auld Lang Syne)

We're mighty proud  
To sing aloud  
'bout the town  
That we call home

Among the oaks  
You'll find good folks  
'Neath the hills  
And mountain dome

O'Danville, O'Danville  
Throughout your history  
From rail to trail  
And farm to charm  
A better place just couldn't be

One hundred years  
And fifty more  
In a valley we adore  
A rush to gold  
So we are told  
Pioneered our spirit's lore

O'Danville, O'Danville  
You're golden every day  
Let's mark the date  
And celebrate  
Our hometown near the bay



### Dressing the pioneer part—50 years ago

Old-timers being honored at the Danville Centennial celebrations in 1958 are (l-r) Shelby H. Fluornoy, Ina Boone Root, Charlotte Wood, 94, and Emma Rose Wiedemann, with the two in the center dressed in the clothes of their ancestors.

OAKLAND TRIBUNE/COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

# Danville – its written history spans 150 years

by Marillyn Cozine

Even in the beginning, the story of Danville is one of growth and change. In the 1850s a sparse scattering of farms dotted the hill-sheltered Valley of the San Ramon Creek. Some of these spreads were farmed by miners who had left the gold fields of the Mother Lode in favor of the wheat fields of Contra Costa. Other early farmers had made their way across country by wagon or had sailed the arduous route around Cape Horn.

Daniel Inman was 22 when news of the great California Gold Rush reached him in Illinois. He and his brother Andrew left home in May 1849 bound for the Mother Lode. After working several claims and running a hotel in Sacramento during a rainy winter, the pair brought their savings to the San Ramon Valley to buy land.

In 1858 a man named Davis asked Inman for permission to build a blacksmith shop at what today is Diablo Road and Front Street in Danville. It became the first building in the tiny village which was to take shape along the banks of the creek. Soon a post office was

needed; it had to have a name. The Inmans listened to suggestions from their neighbors, but modestly rejected Inmanville. Grandma Sallie Young, Andrew's mother-in-law, suggested Danville. It was her hometown in Kentucky and it recognized Daniel Inman as well.

Thus in 1858, the town of Danville, Calif., was born. ...

The imposing mountain which rises above Danville has inspired many legends. A popular tale, attributed to Gen. Vallejo, says that once when mission soldiers were fighting near the mountain to recapture runaway Indians, a bizarre creature appeared. In bright costume, its sudden menacing presence so frightened the soldiers that they fled. Since they believed the strange being to be an evil spirit, they named the mountain Diablo, or devil, in Spanish.

In 1772 Spanish explorers traveled through the Valley en route back to Monterey from an expedition seeking an easy trail to Bodega Bay. Later Spanish Franciscan missionaries arrived to convert and "civilize" the Indians of Contra Costa. The unhappy Indians, whose culture was on a stone-age level, moved to Mission Dolores in San Francisco. In 1806

a measles epidemic killed all children under 10. The tribe perished.

In the 1830s the San Ramon Valley was included in Rancho San Ramon, a Mexican land grant. Herds of cattle roamed freely, foraging the lush native grasses. In spring the rancheros drove their cattle to bay and river areas to sell hides, tallow and horns to shippers and to buy gun powder, salt and other items.

The Californios loved fiestas to which people from miles around came and stayed for days. But those times ended in 1848 when California was ceded to the United States as a result of the Mexican-American War. Two years later, California was admitted to the Union as a free state without first becoming a territory.

That same year Leonard Eddy became the Sycamore Valley's first resident. Robert O. Baldwin and William Meese quit prospecting and came to the San Ramon Valley in 1852. Baldwin raised onions as well as grain. In 1856 a farm which came to be known as White Gate was established by Charles and Nathaniel Howard, clipper ship skip-pers from Maine. Daniel Robert McPherson, grandfather of Roger L. Podva crossed the

plains with Buffalo Bill in 1849 and came to the Tassajara Valley in 1851. F.E. Matteson had a farm of 160 acres and set out orchards of peaches, apples and cherries along with grape vines in what is now Blackhawk. M.B. Ivory came across the Isthmus of Panama and settled in the Green Valley neighborhood near Danville in 1858.

In 1862 Charles Wood established a farm in the Sycamore Valley after coming to California from Massachusetts and Michigan by way of Nicaragua. August Hemme, Silas Stone, David Sherburne, Robert Love, Joel Boone, David Glass, Leo Norris and Joel Harlan were other Valley pioneers whose names are familiar to today's residents.

In Danville's early days, Front Street was a thriving business district. James Close of Toronto, Canada, bought Inman's blacksmith shop and other property in 1875. His son Clarence Close started a grocery store in 1910, which at times also housed the Odd Fellows Hall, the high school and the area's first telephone exchange. The post office and branch of the county library were in the store



1908 - San Ramon Valley Bank made of brick and stone.

**1700s - Danville Oak was a sprout.**

**1772 - Spanish expedition comes through the Valley for the first time in April and camps in Danville.**

**1700s - People have lived in the San Ramon Valley for at least 5,000 years. The Tatcan Indians' homeland was the watershed of San Ramon Creek. Their main village was probably near the Danville Oak.**

**1833 - Rancho of the San Ramon Valley is granted to Mariano Pacheco and his uncle Bartolome Pacheco. It covered all of today's Alamo and Danville, over 8,000 acres.**

**1848 - California Gold Rush begins, bringing thousands of new settlers to California.**

**1850 - California becomes a state.**

**1852 - First post office in the San Ramon Valley is established in Alamo.**

**1858 - Danville is named for Dan Inman, a successful miner who bought land in today's Old Town with his brother Andrew.**

**1860 - Danville's post office begins with Danville Hotel owner Henry Harris as postmaster.**

**1873 - Danville Grange No. 85 is founded. The Grange was a fraternal order that focused on good farming practices and good citizenship.**

**1874 - Members build Grange Hall on Front Street. Agriculture was the business of the valley for more than 100 years. Walnuts and fruit trees predominated in the 20th century.**

**1892 - Danville Hotel opens for business on Railroad Avenue, operated by George and Mary McCarty.**

**1896 - New Danville Grammar School dedicated on Front Street.**

**1908 - San Ramon Valley Bank made of brick and stone.**

building next door. Also on Front Street were the Grange Hall, the Presbyterian Church and a grammar school.

Around the corner was Tiger Alley, notorious for saloons and houses of dubious repute. For years that narrow roadway was mud in winter and dust in summer. Today it is East Prospect Avenue, site of shops and restaurants. ...

In the 1870s some farms in the Danville area were homesteaded by Civil War veterans. Most of those properties were sold soon after they were "proven-up" in order to create larger more economical operations.

Valley wheat farmers formed the Danville Grange in 1873 to protect themselves from unfair pricing practices, and the Grange soon became the social and cultural hub of the community. Grangers, the "movers and shakers" of the time, helped to establish the high school and library, to bring telephone service and to promote Mount Diablo as a state park.

John Hartz was Danville's first developer. In 1888, he subdivided his farm, laid out Hartz Avenue and sold lots. Within a few years, the new street became the town's

central business district, replacing Front Street which was crumbling into the creek from winter rains. ...

Fruit-growing was important to Danville's economy well into this century. Peach, pear, plum and prune orchards, as well as almond, ranged across the Valley floor. By the turn of the century, some older orchards were removed and replaced by walnuts. In 1891 the railroad came to the Valley, after local farmers donated land and money for the right-of-way.

The 1906 earthquake that devastated San Francisco caused great excitement in Danville, but no one was hurt seriously. Most chimneys were cracked or twisted and some broke off completely. A water tank at the livery stable fell, stock in grocery stores tumbled and plaster in homes cracked.

The first World War inspired Danville to patriotic fervor, according to newspaper accounts. One stated, "Every boy from about two to 14 is out marching with flags, drums, guns or anything that looks like a weapon." Many Valley men commuted by train to work at the shipyards at Port Costa during the war years.

Completion of the Bay Bridge in 1936 and the Caldecott Tunnel in 1937 opened Danville and other Contra Costa towns to visitors and new residents from "over the hill." But World War II with its weekly ration of three gallons of gasoline severely limited auto use.

Along with the rest of the West Coast, Danville observed blackouts during the war

and searched the sky for enemy planes. In the spring of 1942, some 12 Danville families of Japanese descent were uprooted from their homes and herded off to the internment camps.

When the war was over, servicemen stationed in California were reluctant to return to the hard winters of the East. The state began to grow and the building boom was on. Here came the Danville subdivisions of the late '40s and '50s—Danville Gardens, Montego, Danville Estates, Cameo Acres, Vista Grande, San Ramon Heights, Montair—and there went the Valley's thousands of acres of walnuts. ... Near the same trail which had been used by Indians, Spaniards, pioneers and farmers, Interstate 680 carried thousands of cars and trucks.

Danville, which had 1,225 residents in 1940, had 3,585 by 1960, and 26,446 in 1980. Median household income in 1980 was \$37,376. In 1982 the citizens of Danville showed their strong sense of community identity by voting to incorporate their town, assuring themselves more control over its path into the future. ■

*From "Danville: Portrait of 125 Years," published by the Town of Danville in 1984 to celebrate its 125th anniversary*

## Pioneer remembers naming the town Danville

"In the summer of 1859 a man named Davis came along and wanted to start a blacksmith shop where the one now stands (Close's) and I gave him permission to do so. He sold out that winter to Jim Johnson, now deceased. Johnson soon after sold to Simon Whitmore.



"Then a man named Long started a wheelwright shop. About the same time H.W. Harris started a hotel, and Wolff & Cohen a store.

"Then the people of the valley wanted a post office. Of course it had to have a name, and quite a number were suggested. At first they thought of calling it Inmanville, but my brother Andrew and I objected to that.

"Finally, Grandma Young, my brother's mother-in-law, said, 'Call it Danville,' and, as much or more out of respect for her, as she was born and raised near Danville, Kentucky, it took that name."

*From a letter by Dan Inman that appeared in the Danville Sentinel dated January 1898*



Ramon Valley Bank opens on corner Prospect and Hartz.



1912 - St. Isidore's Catholic Church is dedicated at Linda Mesa and Hartz.



1964 - Interstate 680 opens from Danville to Walnut Creek with vintage cars making the first trip.



1989 - Mission-style church building on Front Street is restored by Danville and opened as the Town Meeting Hall.

1913 - Social and Fraternal Hall is constructed on Front Street, with the old Grange Hall as its second story. This structure is now the Village Theatre.

1913 - Social and Fraternal Hall is constructed on Front Street, with the old Grange Hall as its second story. This structure is now the Village Theatre.

1931 - Mt. Diablo State Park opens with public access to the summit.

1937-44 - Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill live in the western hills of Danville at their Tao House, which is run today by the National Park Service. Here the Nobel-prize-winning playwright wrote "A Moon for the Misbegotten," "Long Day's Journey Into Night" and "The Iceman Cometh."

1982 - Voters create the Town of Danville and elect a Town Council. John May was the first Mayor.

1996 - Danville Library and Community Center are built on Front Street.

1891 - San Ramon Branch Line of the Southern Pacific opens from Avon (near Martinez) to San Ramon, bringing a new era to the Valley. A large depot is built in Danville.

1891 - San Ramon Branch Line of the Southern Pacific opens from Avon (near Martinez) to San Ramon, bringing a new era to the Valley. A large depot is built in Danville.

1925 - Veterans' Memorial Hall is constructed to honor veterans of the Great War.



1932 - Original Presbyterian Church (1876) on Front Street burns down. A new, mission-style church was constructed in 1933.

1978 - Southern Pacific abandons its right of way.

1978 - Devil Mountain Run is started to benefit Children's Hospital Oakland.

1999 - Restored Southern Pacific depot opens as the Museum of the San Ramon Valley.



1917 - San Ramon Valley Union High School opens to students.



1958 - First Hay Days celebration marks Danville's Centennial, including a parade, carnival, Miss Pioneer Belle contest and barbeque.



mid-1980s - Iron Horse Regional Trail begins. Today the trail is 30 miles long.

—Beverly Lane, June 2008

SHANNON COREY

# The freeway changed everything

## After 1964, the San Ramon Valley left behind its rural past

by Beverly Lane

Hay Days in 1958 was quite a party! Over four days it celebrated Danville's Centennial and put on a parade, carnival, aquacade, barbeque and Pioneer Belle contest. A special Valley Pioneer featured historical articles and a congratulations letter from President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

That same year Danville Hotel owner and idea man Russel Glenn created the Danville Confederacy, which encouraged downtown stores to "create a town with a pleasing appearance." At one point he and his Confederacy committee announced that Danville had withdrawn from the 20th century and chosen to live in a simpler, older time. The Confederacy's slogan was "Old Century Leisure—New Century Convenience." Already in the works was one convenience, a new freeway.

In some ways these 1958 events reflected a community in the final throes of rural life, just as the boom years began. Danville changed forever when the I-680 freeway opened in 1964.

Indeed, the '60s were truly watershed years for Danville. That decade saw school unification (1964) and huge debates over new educational ideas, the start of today's July Fourth patriotic events and parade (1962), Glenn's new Silver Dollar Banquet Room (1965) and two unsuccessful valley-wide incorporation elections (1963 and 1967).

County decisions created change as well: the planned unit development ordinance (1963) that was first applied to Sycamore and

For years State Highway No. 21 was the only north-south road through the San Ramon Valley. As the population grew, increasing numbers of cars took that highway, and drivers came to dread the bumper-to-bumper traffic. Danville had 1,225 people in 1940; 3,585 in 1960; and 16,218 in 1970. Contra Costa County counted 100,450 people in 1940 and 555,805 in 1970.

The Valley was ripe to host the East Bay's inland freeway when the National Highway System began in 1956. And residents were unanimously eager to relieve the congested Danville highway. The specific freeway alignment was hotly debated and, finally, a mid-Valley route was chosen. A new road and offramp were named El Cerro. In 1962 a controversy over the Diablo Road access in Danville erupted; people vociferously objected to losing mature oak trees for an offramp. When the Chamber of Commerce supported the offramp, people called and threatened to boycott downtown merchants.

In due course the 6.75-mile freeway segment from Walnut Creek to Sycamore Valley Road was built by the Guy F. Atkinson Co. for \$13.7 million. Gordon Ball Construction of Alamo made a bid as well, but came in second.

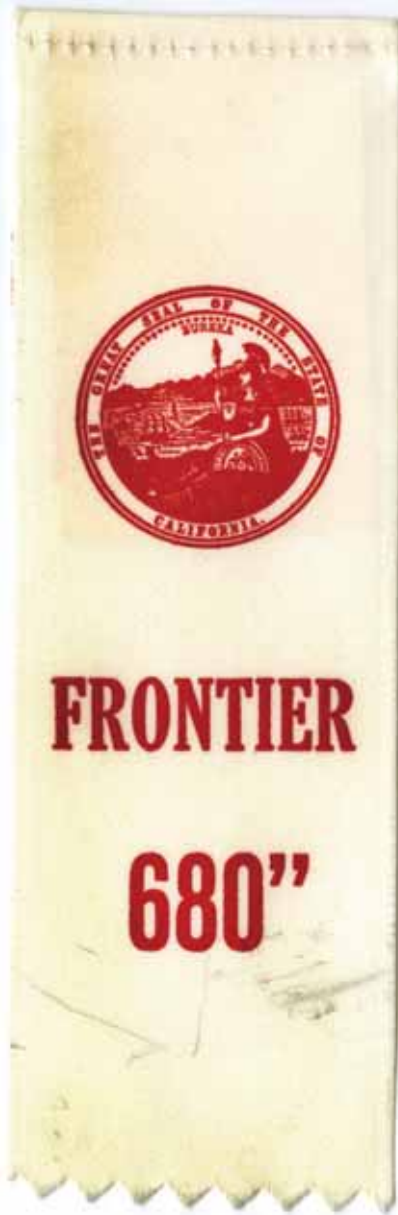
A three-day event called "Frontier 680" was chaired by Warren Scolin with Bill Hockins as Grand Marshall. Ninety-year-old pioneer Claude Glass cut the ribbon with County



Special signs and ribbons proclaimed "Frontier I-680" as people throughout the San Ramon Valley welcomed the freeway.

Greenbrook Homes; the assessor's decision that the "highest and best use" of ranch lands would be homes; and voter approval to join the East Bay Regional Park District (1964).

VALLEY PIONEER COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY



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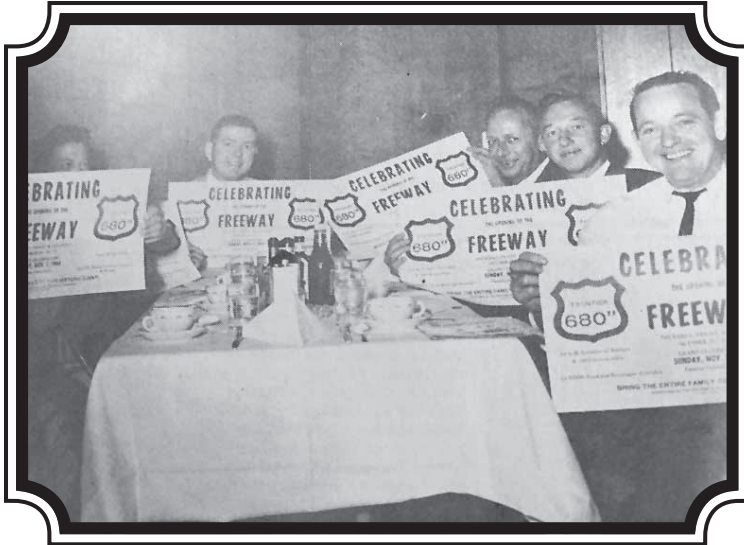
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VALLEY PIONEER/COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

Supervisor Mel Neilson and Chamber President Cecil Borton looking on. Four parachutists landed on the pavement, and a procession with bagpipes, antique cars and Congressman John Baldwin paraded down the empty freeway on Sunday, Nov. 15, 1964.

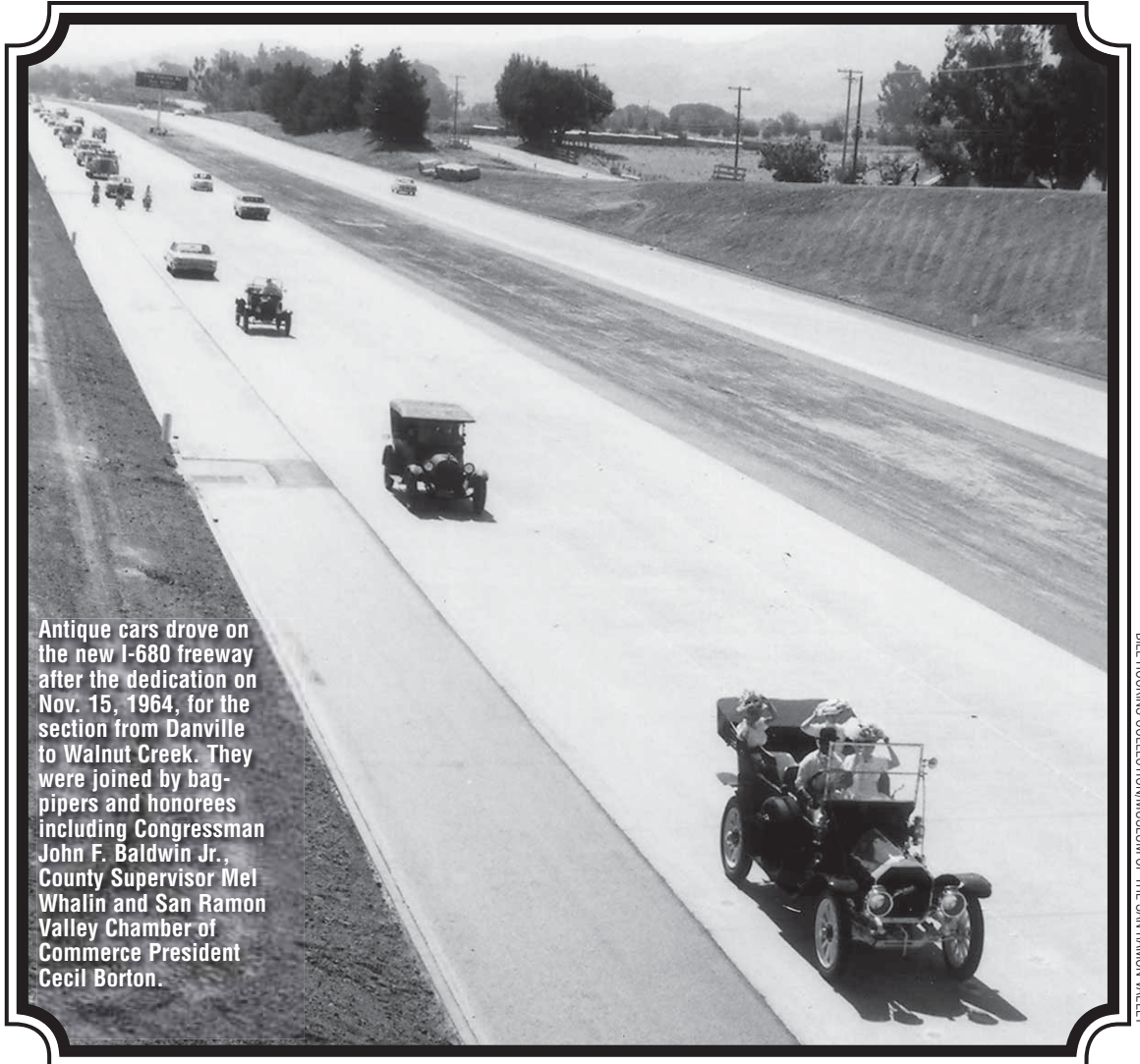
One headline proclaimed "Happiness is a New Freeway!" Times reporter Donald Brand wrote "it's a time for great joy and jubilation (because) one of the Bay Area's worst continuing traffic jams is over."

John and Margaret May lived next to Danville Boulevard at the time. He went out to get the paper on Nov. 16 and came back to say to his wife, "It's as if a bomb has dropped and we're the last people on earth!"

The old Danville highway was indeed quiet as through-traffic bypassed the town. Drivers on the freeway admired the bucolic valley with its walnut and fruit orchards spread out on either side. When the Baldwin Ranch and others saw their annual assessments rise from \$4,000 to \$40,000, home developers took the opportunity, purchased the land and built new housing. Suburban Danville was born.

Yes, the freeway changed everything.

Sources: Valley Pioneer and Alamo-Danville Observer in 1960s, Contra Costa Times, Dec. 3, 1964



Antique cars drove on the new I-680 freeway after the dedication on Nov. 15, 1964, for the section from Danville to Walnut Creek. They were joined by bagpipers and honorees including Congressman John F. Baldwin Jr., County Supervisor Mel Whalin and San Ramon Valley Chamber of Commerce President Cecil Borton.

BILL HOCKINS COLLECTION/MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

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July 3rd 4:00-8:00 p.m. All Events FREE!

4pm - 7 pm

- Community Picnic on the Town Green on Front Street.
- Music by the Cruisetones

5pm - 8pm

- Hay Days Celebration in the Railroad Avenue parking lot
- Kid's Carnival Games
- Kid & Pet Costume Parade
- Children Train Rides
- Old Fashion Bathing Suit Show
- Coronation of Miss Pioneer Belle
- Music
- Dreyer's Ice Cream
- Arabian Horse Exhibition
- Hay Rides

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# Why I love

# DANVILLE

by Danville third-graders

## from the class of Barbara Manley, Vista Grande Elementary

I know Danville doesn't usually have robberies because it is a peaceful town. Danville has a store, a barber shop, and more.  
—Anika D.

On holidays your neighbors will come to your house and give you a present, or when you're just moving to Danville your neighbors will welcome you.  
—Olivia L.

In the summer I like to have picnics in parks and play sports like volleyball, tennis, and soccer.  
—Irina V.

I really like the library. You have a quiet place to work. ... You don't even need to go in to return your book.  
Vinson K.

Oak Hill Park has lovely people. But most of all, I like the ducks and the playground.  
—Natalie F.

## from the class of Debbie McGovern, Vista Grande Elementary

I especially like Osage Park because you can play a ton of sports there. It is a blast of fun.  
—Jack O.

I really love ... Bridges. I smell the aroma of lavender everywhere. ... The food tastes magnificent, just like a patch of heaven.  
—Max K.

Mt. Diablo is a calm place. You can hear birds chirp and bees buzz. Birds sing as smooth as the wind.  
—Christian

Here are some reasons why I love Danville's 4th of July Parade. 1. Standing on the sides and get-

ting things from everybody in the parade. 2. Hanging out with your friends and just having fun. 3. Watching the parade and hanging out with family.  
—Ali N.

I really love Danville's Grange because there are nice dance classes and nice dance teachers.  
—Sarah E.

I really love Danville's fun and great sport teams. Diamonds are very clean and well taken care of.  
—Lily M.

I really love Danville's sport leagues. I love them because they give kids something fun to do over summer.  
—Zach L.

One of my favorite food stores is the Candy Shop. When I walk in I am ready to jump off the walls and grab everything.  
—Laurn D.

Danville has great parks because you can get squirted by water.

You can have a barbecue. You can take your dog to the dog park and you can play on the wonderful playground.  
—Grace W.

I really love Danville's shops. One shop I really like is called, "At the Candy Shop." It has tons of candy like the colors of the rainbow never ending.  
—Lucas H.

## from the class of Sandy Madewell, Vista Grande

Rock City (at Mount Diablo) is so much fun to hike on! I don't think I could live without all of Danville's wonderful sports!  
—Sierra

I really love Danville's restaurants. My favorite one is the Crown. My favorite drink there is Root Beer.  
—Kyle

I really love Danville's Iron Horse Trail. There are many things you can do on the Iron Horse Trail like bike, run or walk. There isn't anything in your way.  
—Ethan F.

I really love Danville's schools. We get a great education. We have lots of subjects.  
—Matthew

I really love Danville's Livery because it has Coldstone. Another reason I like the Livery is the

hamburger place, I love hamburgers. M-mmm.  
—Sagan

I love downtown Danville because it has everything I need. I can trust almost all the people that work in downtown Danville.  
—Sophie

I really love Danville's restaurants because they have really good food. My favorite restaurant is the Crown. I think dinner is the best time to go there.  
—Derek G.

Parks are fun and I like that they help build my strength. Danville would be boring if it didn't have parks.  
—Alex F.

## from the class of Candace Roberts, Vista Grande

I love Danville's Mt. Diablo. When you look down from one of its peaks you'll see an astonishing sight of big red and orange burning boulders, rocks and pebbles. And if you go there in the winter, bring warm clothes and... a sled. Yep it snows.  
—Ben M.

I love downtown Danville. There are so many cute little shops like America's Best Karate. There is even a clock tower.  
—Fiona F.

I love Danville's Osage Park because it is a fun park. Sometimes the ice cream man comes.  
—Moson H.

I love my town Danville because I like the Hap Magee Ranch Park.... I did acting camp there. Those are the best memories of my life!  
—Hanna T.

In the summer there is a great activity called Music in the Park. ... My family and I spread out our blanket on the grass and listen to the great music. It's fun to watch the geese and ducks in the ponds.  
—Jessica H.

The One Room Schoolhouse is a wonderful place to learn about how it was in the 1880s. I love dressing up and going there with a basket full of biscuits, fruit and character.  
—Eva K.

Tassajara One Room School House is one of the most fantastic places in Danville. You get to write with slates and put your nose in a circle if you have been bad.  
—Sean B.

"The school house has wonderful docents who teach the children about a school day in 1888. (It) is interesting, magnificent, and beautiful in many ways.  
—Kearsten S.

The reason why I like the Village Theatre is because you can go there and act as if you were a rock star performing for the president.  
—Emory S.

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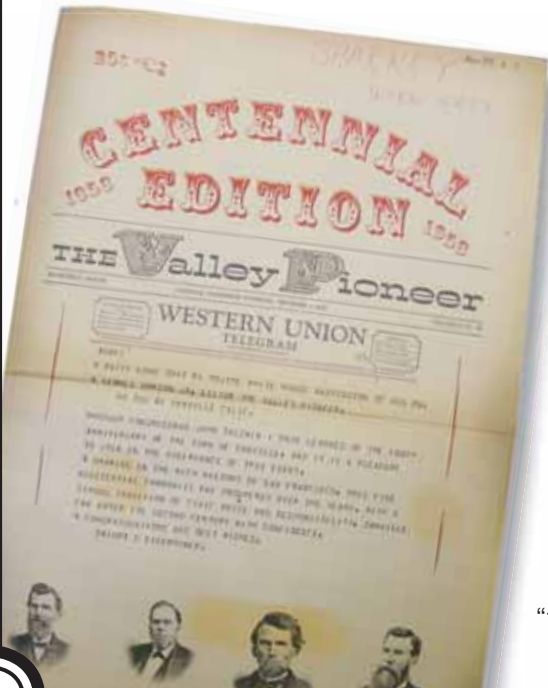
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## 50 years ago

The beloved old Valley Pioneer came out with a special Centennial Edition on Sept. 4, 1958. The front page featured a Western Union Telegram to Editor Semmes Gordon Jr. from President Dwight D. Eisenhower offering congratulations on the area's rich history. The back page printed a poem called "Our Danville," written by the town's oldest living pioneer resident, Charlotte Wood, 94, who was born in 1864 at her family home in the Sycamore Valley. In between were stories from days gone by, chosen, in part, because "they were interesting."



I love Danville's One Room School House. It is just a little building with all these kids in different grades.

—Jordan S.

I love Danville's Village Theatre in Danville because it is part of Danville national history.

—No name

I think downtown Danville is super fun. My family and I (including my dog) always ride bikes and stop at stores.

—Sean C.

One of my favorite things to do in Danville is to go to Hot Summer Nights. I like it because my Grandpa puts his car into the show. Looking at all the beautiful cars (which the owners have made so beautifully) just touches my heart.

—No name

### from the class of Megan Hansen, Vista Grande Elementary

One reason why I love Danville is because you can almost always feel safe. Another reason why, are the people, they are so nice, including me!

—Emily

Danville is a very safe community. The restaurants and the parks are so fun to play at.

—Cole

I really love Danville. This is because Danville always has great schools, it also has great parks, and loads of friendly people.

—Erin

Danville has amazing history, for an example, Leku Eder's history.

—Nadia K.

I love Danville. This is because the parks are fun to play at and the many special events are exciting.

My favorite event is the Fourth of July parade.

—Jessica

All the restaurants and shops have great employees. Every restaurant has clean tables and floors. I really love how Danville has lots of trees and flowers.

—Katlyn T.

I really love Danville's tree lighting. The best part is that I get to stay up late. I really enjoy being able to walk in the middle of the street.

—Samuel E.

I like Danville because of its location. It is near my cousin's and grandparents. Another great thing about Danville is the weather is almost always perfect.

—Andrew

The people are very nice and kind. I like the people in Danville because they will help you. I love everything in Danville.

—Angelie

### from the class of Pam Goettge, Tassajara Hills

Danville has a lot of nature and has people that like to help whenever they can. ... We hope we can interest you to live in this nice and safe environment.

—Brandon B.

In Danville, there are sushi restaurants, pizza parlors, fast food and more! If you are interested in moving to California, Danville is the place to be!

—Sara G.

A lot of restaurants are wonderful. The chefs cook lots of healthy food. Since it's Danville's birthday, I will love Danville with all of my heart.

—Priscilla C.

I love Danville because they have not a lot of crimes, that's right. Keep your fascinating children safe!

—Justin

The movie theater called Century Theaters has 7 movies at a time!

—Olivia W.

Danville has a lot of fun activities like basketball, softball, drawing lessons you name it!

—Mia D.

There are such nice boys and girls, men and women, and an endless supply of pets! Cows on the hills, horseback riding, and it just keeps going!

—Katie M.

All the kids are very smart because they have great schools and teachers in Danville.

—Makenna S.

There are lots and lots of trees so we can get lots and lots of oxygen!

—Brendan L.

If there was an award for best town, Danville would win it.

—Nick H.

My favorite shops are the shops at the Blackhawk Plaza. I love Danville!

—Delaney S.

### from the class of Terry Tringali, Sycamore Valley Elementary

I love Danville because of all the great people "going green." That just makes me so proud to live in this community.

—Katie K.

Another reason I love Danville is the activities. They keep children occupied and are fun. Examples are Danville Girls Chorus, Day Camp and volleyball.

—Rebecca C.



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## Oldtimers come to life

All dressed up for yesteryear as prominent local historical characters are members of the Museum of the San Ramon Valley (clockwise from top left) Don Kurtz, portraying Charles Wood; Sonya Seyler and Stan Wharton as Mary Cox Baldwin and R.O. Baldwin; Geoff Bishop as Dan Inman; Dureen Bishop as Josephine Inman and Nathan Greene as Numa Boone (sometimes he will portray the son, Travis Boone); Joan Kurtz as Charlotte Wood; Betty Casey as Rose Lawrence Peters; and Carmen Curtis, as Mary Ann Jones of Alamo. Roxanne Lindsay will portray her great aunt Mary Wiedemann. These characters will visit informally with people at the June 28 launch of "Vintage Danville: 150 Years of Memories" at the library and at Hay Days events July 3. They will also be part of the Living Treasures program at 7 p.m., Friday, July 18, at the library when historian Beverly Lane is honored.

PHOTOS BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI



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## Hay Days

Continued from page 1

years before, and the festivities included a beard contest.

"I wore my beard for three weeks," said Ohlson. "I never had one before—or since."

Ohlson said they appointed committees to run everything with members from the Chamber, Rotary and the Lions. Kiwanis handled the parade, which was the culmination of the festivities.

After a few years of Hay Days, Danville's big celebration was changed to commemorate the Fourth of July, but eventually the Independence Day festivities such as booths, speeches and fireworks were dropped.

"It all boiled down to one parade," said Ohlson.

However that parade has increased in popularity for the entire San Ramon Valley, and now draws tens of thousands of fans.

It has been blessed through the years by mostly sunny skies.

"It has only rained once," Ohlson noted.

For many years, Rotary gave a pancake breakfast before the start of the parade, which members cooked in the kitchen at San Ramon Valley High School.

"For 22 years, I was chairman of the Fourth of July Parade Pancake Breakfast," said Ohlson. "We started serving at 6 o'clock because people were there early to work in the parade."

But he'd still have time to participate in the parade and see his friends.

"We used to have water fights with water balloons," he said. "Sometimes we'd miss."

"People came from all over," he added.

Ohlson had his veterinary practice adjacent to his home on Rose Avenue downtown. He



OAKLAND TRIBUNE/COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY

Swimmers in the 1958 Hay Days aquacade modeling old-time swimming attire are Don McNeilly (front) and (l-r) Semmes Gordon, Tom Ohlson, Russel Glenn, Jim Reid and Bill Hockins.

and Rosemary were Fremont High School sweethearts in Oakland and have been married for 64 years. When he graduated from veterinary school at Washington State College in 1951, his aunt in Piedmont suggested he look around here for a place to practice.

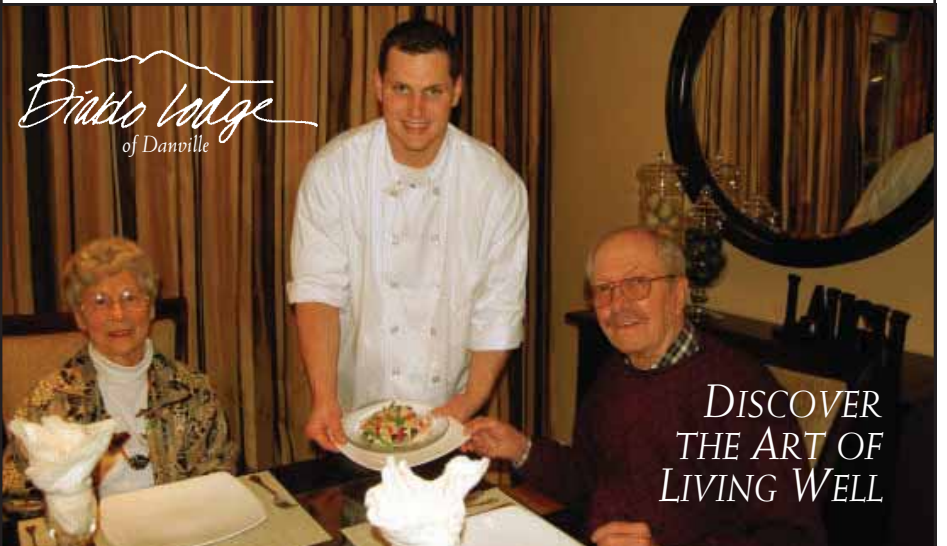
"I was the only veterinarian between Walnut Creek and Pleasanton," he said.

"I was the receptionist until I had my sixth child," Rosemary said. "She was a girl but my two little boys were getting pretty active by then."

Today Rosemary and Tom Ohlson watch the Fourth of July Parade from the comfortably outfitted back of a pickup truck parked by Fosters Freeze along with whoever can make it among their six children, 12 grandchildren or multitude of great-grandchildren.

"We've only missed a couple of parades. We were out of town a couple times," Doc Ohlson said. ■

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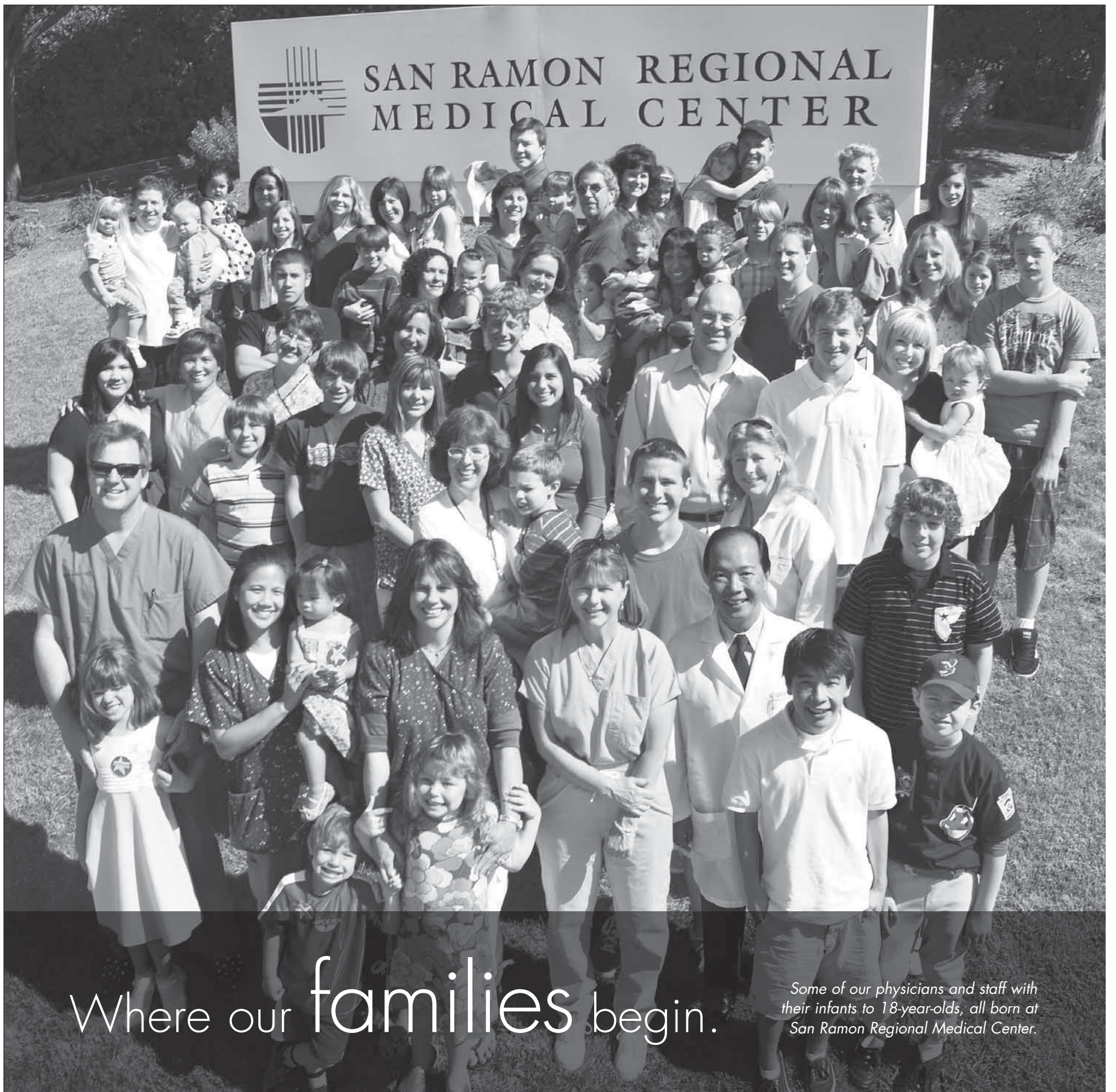
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