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Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum returns to school exhibit after more items donated



Bob Shouse, 88, a Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum volunteer holding his 8th Grade graduation photo from 1944 from Sunnyvale Elementary School, part of the new history exhibit at the museum. (Grace Hase photo)

By **GRACE HASE** |

August 2, 2018 at 10:00 am

From a 1924 Sunnyvale Elementary School report card to a 1984 Macintosh Model 0001 Desktop Computer, over a century of history from schools in the city has been rolled out of storage at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum for a recent exhibit now on display until October.

But this isn't the first time the local museum has delivered this exhibit.

The museum originally opened in 2008 and tells the story of Sunnyvale's founders to the city's cannery days, the Lockheed technology invasion and beyond. But this summer, school is back in session for a revised History of Schools in Sunnyvale.

"We have a lot of things in storage that have been donated that we simply don't have room to put up a permanent display," Museum Director Laura Babcock said. "This is our way to make sure that everyone in the community is able to see everything that the museum has in its collection."

The display, which is open through Oct. 7 and housed upstairs in the rotating exhibit room, is actually the first historical theme that the museum has repeated, according to Babcock. It was so popular the first time that some Sunnyvale residents donated their own pieces of school history for a future exhibit. When the museum held a special reception in mid-July to show off extra items in the collection, residents turned up with more items once again

"We had one family who had the last family member moving out of Sunnyvale, but their family had been here for four generations," Babcock said. "So, they're bringing all of their history of things that belong in Sunnyvale and then the rest of their family knows where it is and knows it's always protected and taken care of."

One of the pieces that can be seen this time around is a 1944 graduation program for Sunnyvale Elementary School's eighth grade graduation accompanied with a photo of the class. The donor, 88-year-old Bob Shouse, is a volunteer at the museum and decided to lend his photo for the exhibit because it was a piece of history they didn't already have.

"I still have some stuff at home and in the car where it's got to a point now where I talk to the kids and (I tell them), 'everything you have, give to the museum,'" Shouse said about where he wants his remaining pieces of Sunnyvale history to go when he passes.

After Shouse graduated from Sunnyvale Elementary School he went on to Fremont Union High School. For him, the exhibit is a reminder of how much has evolved at the high school from the picture he still has in his memories.

“The only building was the main building and the gymnasium was smaller,” he said. “There was a very small swimming pool and we had a workshop way out there and then the old student union, which was a relic from 1929. That’s where we had the jukebox and the kids would go there for lunch. You go look in there now and it just looks so different.”

Among Shouse’s graduation photo, visitors can ogle at buttons from the 1980s and 1990s boasting Columbia Community School accomplishments and gaze at a Fremont Union High School class of 1929 photo where the women wore their hair in bobs and finger waves and the men had slicked back hair and suits and ties.

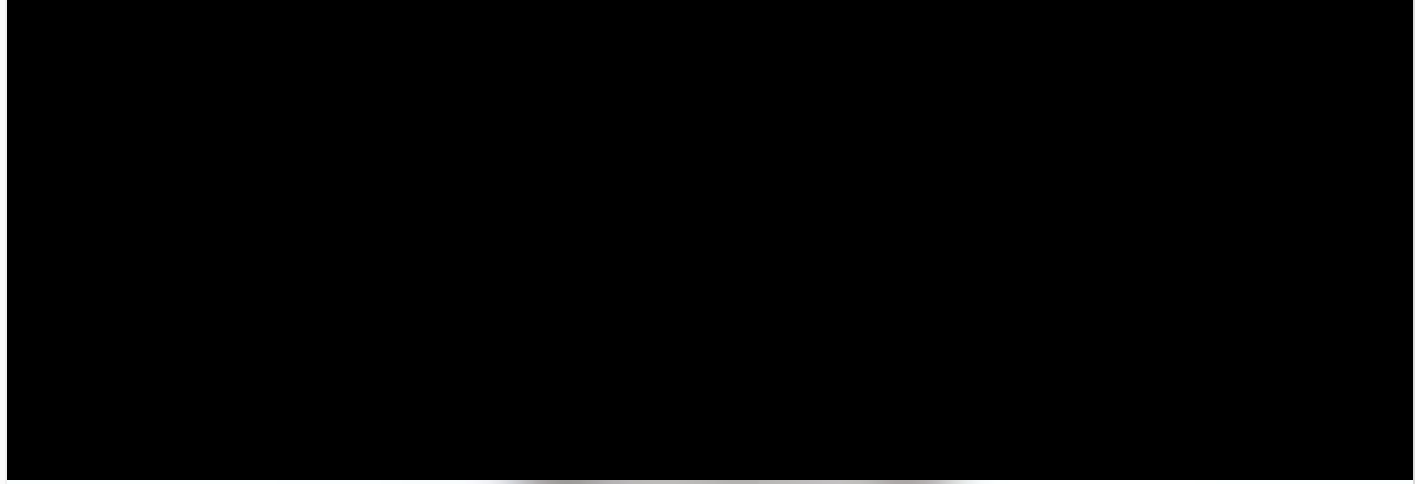
“It starts with the late 1800’s with the first grammar school and goes all the way through (until now),” Babcock said. “Of course, schools have changed names, schools have been bulldozed and elementary has changed to junior highs. We tried to make sure we included all schools in Sunnyvale including privates and parochial schools.”

Find more at heritageparkmuseum.org.

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