



GLEN ELLEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY • NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2024 EDITION

# Celebrate

## A SPECTACULAR WIN FOR GLEN ELLEN AS GEHS FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT!

The Glen Ellen Historical Society along with advocacy groups, SCALE (Sonoma County Advocates for a Liveable Environment), Sonoma Mountain Preservation, Valley of the Moon Alliance and Eldridge for All prevailed in a monumental court decision that denied the Sonoma County Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as a viable solution for the Eldridge property that was the site of Sonoma Developmental Center for 130 years. Judge Brad DeMeo set aside the flimsy work of Permit Sonoma and Dyett and Bhatia stating the EIR did not meet the criteria for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by its failure to address multiple issues such as wildlife, fire evacuation, biological issues and housing numbers. Importantly, Judge DeMeo stated that Sonoma County failed to show how the Historic Preservation Alternative was inadequate.

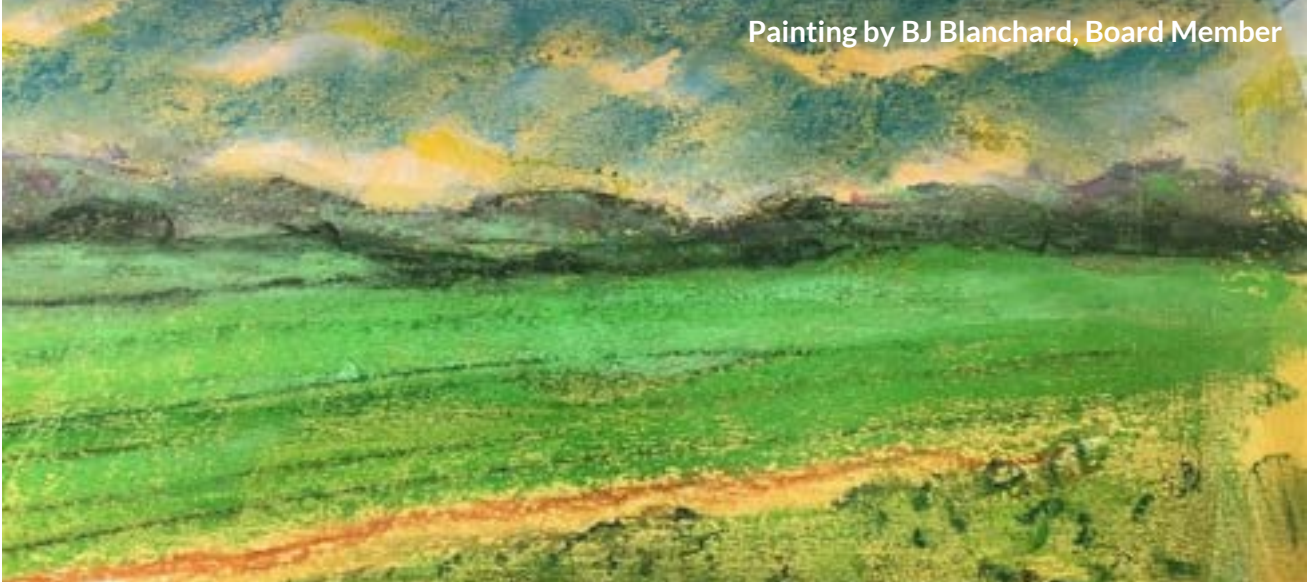
Attorney Susan Brandt-Hawley and GEHS Advisory Board member argued brilliantly that the EIR was devoid of any substantial evidence or analysis whatsoever and the court concluded that the Plan's proposed mitigation measures are on the whole "vague and limited to hopeful intentions." Attorney Brandt-Hawley has been a Glen Ellen resident and CEQA expert who was recruited by the Glen Ellen Historical Society to challenge the EIR and fight the deficient work by Sonoma County.



*Our deepest appreciation*

to Susan Brandt-Hawley,  
CEQA Attorney,  
GEHS Advisory Board Member  
and Home Town Hero!

This bright moment demonstrated how a committed group of citizens can make a difference and effect change. Our future depends on protecting the past and we are one step closer to success in saving the Eldridge property from overdevelopment and destruction of history. And most importantly I want to take a moment to let you know how deeply grateful we are to the Historical Society board for their support and generous financial contribution to this lawsuit and to our community at large who stood with us to fight the good fight in generosity and spirit.



## A Letter From the President

Dear Friends,

With the vibrant colors of Spring blooming all around us we hope you are able to spend time in the glorious bounty and beauty of this special place we live in. At the Glen Ellen Historical Society, springtime symbolizes not only the renewal of nature but also the revitalization of our shared commitment to preserving our local heritage. In this season of growth and rejuvenation, we find ourselves reflecting on the many milestones we have achieved together and anticipate the exciting path that lies ahead.

### This year the Historical Society has:

- Launched a 2024 three-part lecture series. Our first lecture presented by Breck Parkman was a rousing success featuring tales from Jack London and the Beauty Ranch, concluding with a lovely reception at board member Nancy Padian's Creekside home. Two more lectures to follow!
- Participated in the "Jack to Jack" Race on Sonoma Creek. The GEHS supported the Jack London Yacht Club by tabling at Jack London Village on the day of the race.
- Continued our work as partners on the SDC Lawsuit to fight for stronger environmental protection, keeping historic resources and against aggressive development.
- Received an award from the Sonoma County Historical Society Commission for our outstanding work in modernizing our archival collection.
- Created and organized the SDC protest which drew close to 300 people opposing the Rogal development plan.
- Continued our archival work with the Sonoma State University Archeological Research Center.
- Collaborated with Jack London Village and Songbird Parlour to work on an historic "Jack London inspired" garden at the village.
- Continued to provide for and maintain our small public library at the Jack London Village with support from the Sonoma Valley Regional Library.
- Celebrated our beloved Archie Horton's (Glen Ellen Historic "artist in residence") 90th birthday!

We are off to a great start so stay tuned for more to come!

With your unwavering support and dedication, we continue to safeguard the stories, artifacts, traditions and future events that weave together the fabric of our beloved Glen Ellen. Amidst the spectacular landscapes, we invite you to join us in celebrating the spirit of community and connection that defines our valley.

Whether through attending our upcoming events, participating in volunteer opportunities, or simply sharing your own memories and insights, your involvement is what truly makes our organization thrive. We appreciate your continued support and passion for this place of exceptional beauty and history.

As we embrace the spirit of renewal and growth this Spring, we invite you to join us in solidarity and support in preserving historic and wild landscapes to ensure that the Valley of the Moon remains a safe, thriving and livable community that honors and preserves the legacy of Glen Ellen for generations to come.

Warmest regards,  
Angela Morgan

## Our Beloved Archie Horton Turns 90!!



At 90-years old, Glen Ellen's Archie Horton's art is alive and well. Pictured is Archie at his 90th birthday with Jim Sheer and Teresa Murphy!

Our beloved artist in residence and GEHS board member Archie Horton turned 90 this April!!

You can enjoy the artwork of a disappearing Glen Ellen in watercolor and black and white, in a formal portfolio of frameable images, offered by the Glen Ellen Historical Society. For information on purchasing this item email us at [info@glenellenhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@glenellenhistoricalsociety.com)

### Glen Ellen Historical Society Lecture Series - Save the dates!

Saturday, July 20 at 1 pm join us for a presentation entitled "Buried Memories at SDC". This talk centers on archeological research from Sonoma State University. Dr. Alexis Boudin and Dr. Ben Smith oversaw exploration of the historic cemetery at SDC.

On September 21 at 1 pm we will present the "Legacy of Tilden Daken", the Early California Impressionist Painter who painted in the Valley of the Moon and surrounding Sonoma County from the 1880s through the 1920s. His paintings capture the terrain as it must have looked at the turn of the last century, and will appeal especially to art lovers. The presentation will be given by Tilden Daken's grand daughter, Bonnie Portnoy.

Both lectures will be at Mayflower Hall with a lovely creekside reception to follow at a neighboring property. Space is limited, to reserve your spot please email BJ Blanchard @ [bj@mabco.com](mailto:bj@mabco.com).

## *Saying Goodbye to Gregg Montgomery*

### **INVALUABLE BOARD MEMBER & HISTORIAN**

It is with great reluctance and deep respect that the Board of Directors bids Gregg Montgomery a fond farewell for over 12 years of dedicated service to the Glen Ellen Historical Society. His depth and breadth of knowledge, good humor and generosity are vast and legendary. Gregg will continue to assist the GEHS in an advisory capacity while his passions take him to new fields of knowledge and allow for more family endeavors. A big thank you for all the digging, probing and searching for the history all around us.



### **Fire Evacuation Study**

YOUR help is needed with a critical Wildfire Evacuation Time Survey. A citizens' group has hired KLD Associates to do the first ever Wildfire Evacuation Study for Sonoma Valley. KLD has developed evacuation plans for every nuclear power plant in the country and wildfire evacuation plans for a dozen cities in the western United States. For the first time the fire district will know how long it actually takes to evacuate people, schools, hospitals, and assisted living communities in Sonoma Valley. This will dramatically improve our wildfire safety in Sonoma Valley.

Please go to [evacuationsurvey.com/sonomavalley](http://evacuationsurvey.com/sonomavalley) to take a five minute anonymous survey to help KLD understand your evacuation issues (one per household). For more info and to donate please go to [VOTMA.org/evac-study](http://VOTMA.org/evac-study).

# GEHS INSTRUMENTAL IN CREATING AND ORGANIZING SDC PROTEST

We were instrumental in helping create and organize a protest at the Sonoma Development Center in March to challenge the expanded proposal of the site. Special shout out to Board Member Nick Brown for stepping up to organize. Close to 300 gathered at the historic gates of the campus in ardent and colorful protest carrying signs and banners to decry the expansion of the remaining 950-acre campus.



The Glen Ellen Historical Society stood with the community in opposition to this proposal which threatens the community during fires, imperils the wildlife corridor, contributes to global warming and will destroy many adaptable historic structures. Using a “density bonus” Keith Rogal and Grupe, selected by the state as developers, were able to increase the number of housing units from 650 to over 900 along with a 170,000 square foot hotel, a 161,000 square foot “innovation center” and 80,000 square feet of non-residential construction.

The town of Glen Ellen and the Historical Society objects to Rogal and the Eldridge Renewal Plan. We support affordable housing and job security but we do not support the idea that market rate housing and overdevelopment are set against preserving history, the urgency of climate change and the health of our community. It is vital to understand that once the property is altered or destroyed there can be no return. Ecological, historical and environmental impacts are at stake.

The high density of homes brings with it a number of problems that severely affect the health of the wildlife corridor and surrounding community, including but not limited to, increased traffic, reduced air and water quality, artificial lighting, removal of native plants, placement of invasive species through home and business landscaping, pesticides, runoff and debris from construction, and the arrival of pets and domestic animals.

Our wildlife corridor is not just about habitat connectivity, it is the heart of our valley, it is our legacy for clean air and clean water which we need for our survival. We have already stressed our ecological systems beyond repair and if we compromise these last few wild places in Sonoma Valley, we will tip the scales toward a much bigger ecosystem collapse. We ask the county and state to carefully consider the impact of close to 4000+ people along with their cars, traffic and pets on this historic resource and precious wildlife corridor along with carbon emissions, climate change and the future of Sonoma Valley.

We urge our county and state to step forward and support the voice of the community to preserve history and help create a sustainable and climate resilient future. We have been so fortunate to live in this beautiful and awe-inspiring valley. Our children, yours and all future generations deserve the same.

# The Roma Token Mystery

It wasn't long ago, maybe a hundred years or so, that several hotels existed along Glen Ellen Avenue (now Arnold Drive), including The Chauvet, The Mervyn, The Riverside Hotel, The Glen Ellen Hotel, and The Roma Hotel and Bar and Annex, renting for around \$2.00/day, \$10/week in the early 1900s. The Roma Annex still exists on the corner of Carquinez and Arnold and is now the Talisman Winery, sporting a colorful map mural on the side of the building.

These roadhouses accommodated railway men needing overnight lodging, and the many holiday makers visiting from the city swam in the cool creeks on hot summer afternoons. Visitors ate at restaurants like Johnny Cabou's resort "Rocky Terrace" (now the Olea Hotel). Here you would find Frenchman serving deliciously prepared frogs' legs giggered from Spreckels' lake just a few miles away.

The Roma Hotel was situated where the little blue houses are today on Arnold opposite the Fig Café at the base of Carquinez Avenue. It was owned by the Pancrazi family who lived around the corner up Carquinez, and had a popular restaurant supplied by an extensive vegetable garden, which was, the story goes, a favorite of Jack and Charmian London.

GEHS has been fortunate enough to receive treasures to add to our archives, from families who recognize the importance and value of these items. Last year, Mike McNab, a Pancrazi descendent, sent us many photos and memorabilia collected by Max Cunninghame, (Mike's uncle) and Principal of Dunbar School for many years. Among these gems were four of the Roma tokens for the family hotel. Our deep appreciation to Mike for his many contributions to our archives!

We also appreciate Mr Ken Reed who has offered to the Glen Ellen Historical Society an unusual memory from the Roma Hotel. Ken's mother was the first Postmaster, in 1961, at the brand-new Post Office building immediately north of the Glen Ellen bridge on Arnold. Frances Reed gave her son Ken a "token" from the Roma Hotel, which he has generously donated to the Glen Ellen Historical Society for safe-keeping.

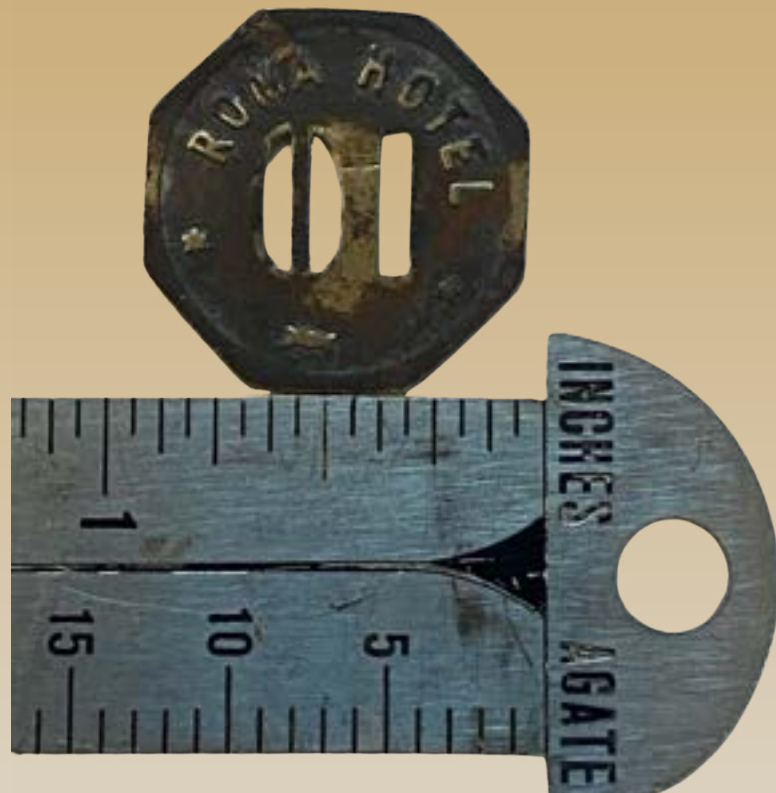
Ken's copper coin/token is clearly marked "Roma Hotel" on one side and on the opposite it says "Good for 10 in trade". But ten what? Ten cents? Ten dollars? Why did the Roma Hotel issue them? Did the banks play any role? Was it simply a tourist memento worth 10 cents? We are curious to know and solicit any knowledge or feedback you might have.

Mr. Reed says, "I was told that Mr. Pancrazi gave them to a few locals to be used as a handbill for advertising, so visitors who came in late on the train could stay overnight at the Roma Hotel. In the morning guests would be picked up by spring wagon and taken to resorts on Sonoma Mountain. Thus, making money, I think, but Mom never really said why".

Another possibility is that these tokens were used as "cash" to purchase things within the hotel.

Still, it remains a charming mystery from Glen Ellen's past. We encourage the community to check your attic, garage and basement so that you too can contribute to Glen Ellen history before it is lost forever!

BJ Blanchard, Board Member



# ELDRIDGE CEMETERY DEDICATION



A memorial at SDC cemetery was held in April amid the bloom of wildflowers and a warm spring sun. This dedication honored the field where dreams were laid to rest with the remains of nearly two thousand deceased and 500 cremains of residents of Sonoma Developmental Center between 1891 and 1962. GEHS President Angela Morgan served on the cemetery committee that also included past employee Teresa Murphy at the onset, Disability Rights advocates, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), SDC parent Kathleen Miller, Christian Pease and Tracy Salcedo.

Ms. Miller and Mr. Pease teamed up and petitioned DDS, the Department of General Services, Senators Dodd and McGuire who helped create a funding package to build a commemorative wall and handicap accessible visitor parking. The ceremony included comments by DDS Director Nancy Bargman, Senators Dodd and McGuire, Christian Pease with Kathleen Miller and former SDC Reverend Kathy Speas who shared her eloquent ending thoughts while the enchanting melodies by the Valley of the Moon Threshold Choir concluded the event. Roses were placed on the wall as visitors mingled, shared thoughts and made their way down the hill.

The Glen Ellen Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) and your tax-deductible membership provides essential funding for our programs, events, publications, education, archival and preservation projects. History shapes our relationship to community, locates us in time and place and helps give meaning to our lives. It is the thread that holds us together. Your membership allows us to continue our mission of empowering everyone to make history meaningful.

**For information on how to join or donate go to: [www.glenellenhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.glenellenhistoricalsociety.org).  
Send checks to Glen Ellen Historical Society, PO Box 35, Glen Ellen CA 95442.  
Become a member and join today!**

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