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The Varsity Theater in the Headlines by Jim Becket

Special points of interest:

- Varsity to be leased to Fenske/Novakovic for Independent Films
- Council sticks to original agreement, but encourages cooperation
- Building to be returned to its original look as much as possible
- DHS Annual Meeting called—October 30



Today's Varsity (Historical Resources Inventory 2003)

The Davis Historical Resource Varsity Theater, shown above in its current look, is in the headlines again. At its meeting Tuesday, October 25, the City

Council unanimously approved a lease with Jon Fenske and Sinisia Novakovic to show independent and art films in the to-be-renovated-

building. Approval came after a week's delay because proper notification had not been given the week before.

During the discussion the previous week, Council had been urged by some to consider a plan for live music in the Varsity instead of the films, but Council eventually agreed to honor their initial agreement with Fenske/Novakovic. However, the Council verbally urged the two groups to

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DHS Annual Meeting Called by Mary Ann Harrison

- WHEN:** Sunday, October 30, 2005
- WHERE:** Hattie Weber Museum, 445 C Street
- TIME:** 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM
- PROGRAM:** Activities and plans for the preservation and promotion of Davis History
- SPEAKERS:** Phyllis Haig and Jim Becket, Hattie Weber; John Lofland, History Research Group; Wendy Nelson, Preservation of Davis Historical Resources.
- DISCUSSION:** Where Do We Go From Here?
- WHO:** DHS Members. General Public invited of course.



Recent photo of D-H-B Tank House. Even in this small picture, the sad state of repair is evident. It is no wonder that those uninformed or uninterested in Davis history do not see it as valuable.

"We should move away from the belief that public resources should be self supporting. Sometimes public resources provide a benefit beyond that does not have a monetary value."

Commissioner Berteaux



Above: Gordon House 337 B

Below: Harrington House 217 2nd



The Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Tank House, by Jim Becket

As reported in the August 5 issue of *davisvilletoday* and other places, the Dresbach-Hunt-Boyer Tank House is part of the proposal from Fenske/Novakovic for the use of the Varsity Theater. However, it is not part of the lease agreement for the Varsity signed by the City at this time (see related story, page 1). At its September 17, 2005, meeting, the DHRMC, along with several residents, raised significant questions relative to the Tank House. It was also a topic of discussion at the Joint Meeting of the City Council and the DHRMC on October 17, 2005.

In an e-mail message to *davisvilletoday*, DHRMC Chair Rand Herbert expressed that he felt the

joint meeting had been very productive and positive, and he believed the Council now has a better understanding of the issues.

We believe several significant statements were made at the DHRMC meeting on the 17th, both by Commissioners and by residents. Some of the comments are quoted below from the minutes of the meeting:

"Resident Mark Dupree stated that the pump house is an iconic symbol of the history of the City, and it would be problematic to remove the structure. Reuse of the structure should be evaluated and demolition of the structure would be a tremendous loss to the City.

"Resident Tim Allis stated that a relatively small number of these structures exist, and the city should consider rehabilitation and reuse for public educational purposes.

"Commissioner Tibor stated that this is a new Commission addressing an old issue. The City has done a poor job of encouraging reuse of the structure because it has been neglected. Demolition of the structure would result in a significant impact.

"Commissioner Berteaux stated that this proposal has prompted the city to engage in a conversation that should have been addressed a while ago, and the discussion

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Renovation and Restoration, by Jim Becket

In the last issue of *davisvilletoday*, we highlighted some restoration and renovation projects underway in Davis. That practice continues in this and future issues.

The top picture to the left is of the house owned by Davis residents Leslie and Scott

Gordon at 337 B Street. Originally a farm house built in 1894 (and no, it has not been moved), it has recently been repainted by the Gordons.

Mike Harrington has been engaged in what might be termed an "extreme makeover" in current day terminology

for some time. We will continue to visit this restoration project and record its progress.

Although not evident when looking from this view in the front, the upstairs apartments have been completed and are rented. A tenant we spoke with was very pleased with the result.

Varsity—Cont'd from Page 1

work together to bring some live music to the Varsity.

From the perspective of historical preservation, the use is appropriate and the proposed alterations were not significant changes in the eyes of the Davis Historical Resources Management Commission.

Restoration, as such, is not proposed, although elements of the proposal will be aimed in that direction. The Commission has requested that Fenske/Novakovic return with any “proposed color changes; proposals to remove the paint on the bricks; proposal to re-

store the marquee sign to its original location and to restore the clerestory windows.” (Quoted from the motion which the Commission passed unanimously) Since substantial interior changes have already been made over the years, replication of the original appearance is not being required. It is the intent of the Commission, however, that the appearance of the theater, both inside and out, be returned to its original look as much as possible. (Statement based on an email exchange with DHRMC Chair Rand Herbert.)

The rehabilitation of the



The Varsity as it appeared “new” in 1951. Of special note are the marquee sign out over the sidewalk and the windows above the doors. (Photo from John Lofland, “Davis 1910s—1940s,” original in UCD Special Collections, Eastman’s Originals Collection.)

part of the building where Clarence Cooper’s Insurance has done business for many years is not of historical significance and was not part of the DHRMC review.

The phase of the saga involving the D-H-B property is reported on page 2.

“It is the intent of the Commission, however, that the appearance of the theater, both inside and out, be returned to its original look as much as possible.”

Observation by Becket

Three Worlds of History Organizations & a Local History Implication, by John Lofland

In the United States, there are several thousand history organizations, associations whose prime missions—whose goals—are to portray and present history.

Although united on these goals, these organizations tend to adopt only one of three dominant strategies.

Boiled down to one word captions, these three are education, preservation, and research.

THREE WORLDS OF HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS

History organizations and persons partial to the same strategy tend to

gravitate to one another and not to be involved with organizations or persons favoring either of the other two strategies.

This is seen clearly at the national level where the leadership, membership, and concerns of the “flagship” organizations of each strategy are sharply different.

I speak of the American Association for State and Local History (education), the National Trust for Historic Preservation (preservation) and the American Historical Association (research).

The world of the first of these tends to history celebration that is cen-

tered on state and local history museums. The education strategy might be said to be emotional in character in the sense of seeking to “interpret . . . history in order to make the past more meaningful in [society]” (phrase from the first sentence on the AASLH website).

In contrast, the world of preservation tends to focus on physical structures surviving from the past as a means by which to portray history. Although emotions are clearly involved, buildings and other constructions are the cen-

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DAVIS RESIDENTS INVOLVED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE The 1965 Davis Bus to the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March By Tansy Thomas

(Editor's Note: This article was submitted by Tansy for this issue prior to the knowledge of the death this week of Rosa Parks, Civil Rights legend. The timing, however, gives the article increased significance.)

Many find surprising the participation of some local Davis residents so concerned about civil rights that they boarded a bus and courageously joined the historic voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965. This is a brief summary based on interviews with some of the participants and local news reports in the Davis Enterprise and California Aggie. This event deserves to be placed in the historical record of Davis, California.

The chartered Greyhound bus departed from the Davis Community Church on Sunday, March 21, 1965, with 27 passengers and stopped in Sacramento for seven others and to attend memorial services for Boston Unitarian Minister James Reeb. Reeb had been beaten to death ten days earlier in Selma. The bus raced for three and a half days virtually nonstop to Alabama to join Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s contingent arriving from Selma. They were going to march the final 15 miles to Montgomery. Dr. King had started from Selma on March 21st. Rev. King originally put out a na-

tionwide call for members of the clergy to join him in Alabama after the March 7th brutalities on marchers, which came to be known as Bloody Sunday, was nationally televised. King subsequently expanded the appeal to "people from all walks of life" to join the demonstration. The second march was limited and symbolic pending a court order. The murder of Rev. Reeb who arrived early for the third march further incited U.S. public opinion. It was the third and successful march that the Davis group joined. Accounts describe the 34 passengers as clergymen and others religiously affiliated, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, ten women, seven of whom were "housewives" six UCD students, three professors, lab technicians, a rancher, a chemist, and three from the Sacramento Concilio. Three African Americans, one Asian American and two Mexican Americans were among the group. Everyone had to sign pledges of nonviolence before boarding the bus. The Davis ministers involved were Pastor Phil Walker, Davis Methodist, Ministers Dave Burnight and John Pamperin (assistant), Cal Aggie House, and Pastors D.L. Proett and Bill Case (assistant), Davis Community Church. The Sacramento religious community included an African American minister and a priest. Pastor Robert Senghas of the Unitarian Church was not on the bus, but very much involved having returned

a week earlier from Selma. He advised the group about the situation there and with many others gave the bus riders a rousing and prayerful send off. There was a significant support group that attended to logistical details, coordination of volunteers, communications between Davis and the MLK headquarters in Alabama in which Jackie Holdstock played a key role as attested and given kudos by those involved.

On the bus to Alabama, the marchers, according to Marilyn Mohrmann, assigned themselves tasks, Pamperin was the leader, keeping in contact with the MLK headquarters. The group reviewed strategies for self defense in nonviolent protests, discussed the issues and sang songs encouraged by Dick Holdstock on guitar. Frieberg monitored developments on his transistor radio. Recruited for a special mission, Rev. Walker left Davis earlier, but came back with the group on the bus. On the bus, the aura of bravado developed, but diminished as they entered the South. The final two bus drivers were hostile; there was icy service at rest stops and then talk of bomb threats. The bus riders arrived subdued and fearful at 5 a.m. on March 24th. They were

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ahead of schedule. They found themselves afraid of most local whites who exhibited dismay at their presence and they felt safe and welcomed by the local blacks.

The group was taken to a Catholic facility, St. Judes, which served the black community and where they were able to shower and take naps. Later they joined, at the outskirts of Montgomery, the arriving Selma group and all the other marchers for a last twelve miles of the march. There were armed federalized troops with planes and helicopters flying overhead, jeeps, and other equipment ordered by President Johnson to protect the marchers. They were picked up by members of their black church host and taken to the Baptist church for a very welcomed feast and songfest.

According to Pamperin, Rev. Proett wowed the congregation with his singing. They returned to St. Jude City for a big celebrity event that evening. The celebrities included Harry Belafonte, Odetta, Dick Gregory, James Baldwin, Leonard Bernstein, Peter, Paul and

Mary.

The next day, March 25th, they marched with Martin Luther King Jr. to deliver the voting rights petition to Alabama Governor George Wallace at the State House. Dr. King addressed a hushed audience with an impassioned inspiring speech making the case for civil rights and voting rights. Governor Wallace refused to accept their petition. The group had been advised that they were to return their buses as soon as the event was over and to leave immediately. The black church folks had packed the bus with plenty of food and there were teary goodbyes.

It was a scary ride until they were clear of the area. Ten minutes later they heard that Viola Liuzzo, a civil rights worker, housewife and Unitarian had been shot and killed in an area they had just passed. Once they felt safe and on the way home, the group began to discuss what they could do for social justice in Davis, a discussion which led to many future activities. The group arrived back in Davis before midnight on March 28, 1965.

The Passenger List:

Davis Passengers: Bob Balla, Rev.

Dave Burnight, Rev. Bill Case, David Chapman, Frankie Cheney, Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Friedberg, Steve Gillman, Richard Holdstock, Judy Iltis, Gene Lasowski, Eugene Martin, Andrew Mills, Merilyn Mohrmann, Alan Ota, Rev. John Pamperin, Dr. Malcom Polk, Rev. Duane Proett, Peggy Thomas, *Terry Turner, Rev. Phil Walker, Larry Wenzle, William Wemple, Anita Whipple. Woodland: Kathryn Johnson, Rev. Melvin Miller. Sacramento: Rev. Anton Pollard, Alicia Jimenez, N. Briblescas, Charles V., Jonah Parker, Steve Gillman. North Highlands: Rev. Leon King. Auburn: Barbara Minor

Newspaper Sources:

The Davis Enterprise: "Davisites Board Bus Bound for Rights March in South." March 23, 1965; "Marchers to Invade Montgomery" March 25, 1965; "Montgomery March Returnees Slate Symposium Tonight" March 30, 1965; "Davisites Gives Impressions of Montgomery March" April 1, 1965. The California Aggie: "Rights Marchers Go to Montgomery." April 2, 1965

Dresbach-Hunt-Bower Tank House Cont'd

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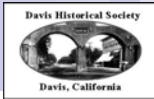
has made people more aware of the value of the structure. We should move away from the belief that public resources should be self supporting. Sometimes public resources provide a benefit beyond that does not have a mone-

tary value.

"Chair Herbert agreed that a focused EIR is necessary and that the little remaining open space around the mansion needs to be preserved. The pump house needs to remain in order to protect the mansion, and any loss of open space will have an impact on the man-

sion."

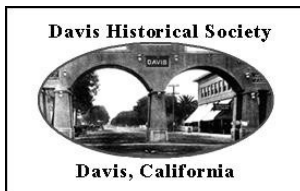
The action taken on Sept. 17th was to pass a motion, unanimously, stating, in part, **"that the demolition of the pump house and the orange trees would result in a significant environmental impact to the designated national register resource."**



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The Purposes of the Davis Historical Society*

The purposes of the DHS are to carry on programs of public education on the history of Davis, to encourage historical preservation in the Davis area, and to promote research and publication on Davis history, including the archiving of historical documents and artifacts.

The first letters of the five words summarizing these purposes spell the word "paper." These words are: Publication, Archives, Preservation, Education, Research.

* As listed on the Web: davishistoricalsociety.org

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tral objects of attention. The third strategy of portraying or presenting history is so distinct and insulated from the first two that it may not even come to mind in discussions among history educators and history preservationists. Nonetheless there are a great many history research organizations. Their strategy features intellectual discovery, analysis and critical scrutiny. In the main, history research organizations are literally rather than metaphorically academic.

As is evident, I am suggesting that these three worlds of history organizations encode the ancient trinity often used to classify the major aspects of human functioning, those of the intellectual, the physical and the emotional. There is, of course, overlap among the three worlds and a great deal of interpenetration.

DEEP DIFFERENCES

But, the differences are also real. Indeed, I would suggest that the differences are quite deep and consequential. Each bespeaks a different sensibility, temperament, and conception of needed and comfortable social action. Educators exude a spirit of the upbeat, "can do," and "lets have a party." Their core tasks include stimulating enthusiasm and interest, and of joyfully bringing people

along.

The world of the preservationist is of necessity grimmer owing to the almost constant need to battle developers bent on demolishing or otherwise desecrating historically significant properties. Preservationists are therefore comfortable with (or try to be comfortable with) political conflict, lobbying, and "speaking truth to power." The preservationist world is one of a never-ending uphill struggle against greed portraying itself as the high priest of the "highest/best use."

In their different ways, educators and preservationists carry on political programs of civic action. Although the civic activity of the educator may seem on the surface to be blandly consensual and "above politics," even history celebration has its enemies. And, of course, the preservationist is almost always involved in very hardball politics. Land-use decisions and big bucks are at the heart of the matter, perhaps even evoking primordial territorial instincts.

The world of the history organization intellectual tends in the direction of the solitary life of the sequestered archive and the basement of musty documents. Participants in this world carry on their own kinds of politics and strife, to be sure. But, these are sandbox compared to those of the preser-

vationist or even of the educator. Given the different core tasks and consequent emotional tone of each of these three worlds of history organizations, we ought to expect that each attracts people of different sensibilities and temperaments.

A LOCAL HISTORY IMPLICATION

To me, one implication of this organizational and social world trinity is that the core tasks and emotional texture of each are so different that it is likely not a good idea to try to combine all three in one organization.

I mention this because such a feat is sometimes attempted, especially in smaller communities. The sheer smallness of the number of people interested in history makes it seem expedient to join all available interests and talents into a single undertaking. I fear this is a recipe for strife and non-participation. Differences in the temperaments suitable for each of these three worlds of history are likely to lead to mutual avoidance.

The alternative is three separate undertakings undiluted by members who are mismatched with their core affinities. This might actually result in a much larger, total membership in all three organizations than in one comprehensive organization.