

I have always been in favor of both history and art. But the supervisors of this county have made a decision for every individual who lives here. They have determined that the most important focus of this county is art. History is gone. But what they don't seem to understand is that this county was one of the original counties when the state was established in 1846. Yet, we can't have a county museum. Why is that? Well, let's look at some behind the scenes activities ... First of all, the museum board was asked to present a plan in front of the supervisors during the first meeting of September. Yes, September. Then it was changed to the end of October, then the first meeting in November and finally the absolutely final date, the meeting in December!!! Isn't that interesting...having a meeting right before the holidays...the worse time to gather support from the history proponents. Although I know a lot of individuals throughout the county called and talked to their supervisors. I received e mails and phone calls. Was that date stall done on purpose???

Then the Museum Board received the Arts Council proposal on Thursday of the week before the supervisors meeting. It was the first time we saw their proposal. Apparently, the art board was sworn to secrecy... The Gibson house will now become an art gallery with very few, if any artifacts remaining. The upstairs, which according to local fire code, only holds 9 people at one time, will now be studios for artists. The artifacts will be ????. Yes, where will they be??? Has this been a done deal? Has the Museum board been lead down the 'yellow brick road'? Have we interviewed and hired a director, and lobbied for a full board and written down a 'going forward' plan for the next 3 years for nothing? It sure looks like it to me. The disrespect that was shown to the museum board was inexcusable. Many of the new board members had only attended 2 meetings.

Then we have the actual meeting in December where the proponents for history were heard as well as the art people. The supervisors discussed the information in front of the visitors. Open comment was over. And what a discussion it was! Statements were made with no basis of truth...I paraphrase...once some 3rd grader comes to the house and checks off that visit, they never return. Or something to that effect....Talk about unfounded opinion!!! Where are your facts? Have you done a survey of individuals who have visited the museum? Or is this just another pontification of someone who thinks he knows it all? Just like at another meeting, the same individual laughed and commented as to why bowling pins were considered artifacts? (Victorian lawn bowling)

We always hear the statement, "We need to be 'fiscally responsible'". And I applaud that. But, has anyone penciled out the cost to the county? The proposal includes hiring a curator at \$200,000. Then there is the storage of the artifacts...where is that going to be? The supervisors complained about the items being stored in less than desirable conditions. Are they going to store the items in heat-controlled rooms? Or in another building, much the same way items are being stored now. Also, what is the cost of moving the items,...trucks, individuals, . But wait, the county wants to have the artifacts move around the county and be shared by all...Who is going to do that? Who is going to pack, unpack, move items hither and yon? What cost is that to the county? And what are the artifacts going to look like...scratched, broken, stolen???

Now the art council is in charge of renting the grounds of the museum and they are going to give a 'portion' of the rentals to the county...How much is a portion? 10%, 20%, 50%???? The Gibson museum ran with a budget of about \$60,000. Now the budget is going to be a lot more...But wait, the supervisors chose art over a museum...Is this being fiscally responsible?

One supervisor said that the art council and the history association in West Sacramento work together and it is very successful...Well, again, talking to the history people in West Sacramento, there is no communication! So I guess that again is 'unfounded opinion'.

The supervisors will probably respond the museum board didn't do much to maintain the building and grounds...I've been on the board for 6 years and in that time the county has done almost nothing to the building and the grounds. David Flory had to beg them to take responsibility to maintain the grounds (even though it was a county park). He brought in the Rotary organizations to fundraise so that we could do minor repairs in the building and the grounds. The 300 year old oak tree had its own fundraiser because the county couldn't even take care of that. The herb gardens had volunteers come in and put drip irrigation into the gardens before they were planted. All this was free....no cost to the county. Again, something that the county should have done...

But they built a kitchen and bathroom on the premises...yes that is right, they did. But remember, the only bathroom was a one door room added to the exterior of the building. It is no longer used because the county has not repaired it. And who does the repairs to the grounds and the buildings...The county??? No, Alan Flory and his crew. Again, a volunteer...no cost.

And what about the county's responsibility to staff the museum board...We have not had a full board for the past 4 years. We were told no one wanted to be on our board...Was that the truth? You figure that out.

The decision has been made...the art council will now be in charge of the Gibson House...The county has chosen...but, this is what I ask myself...

Everyone wonders why Trump was elected as President of the United States....his job was to clean out the swamp....Well, guess what, the swamp is right here in Yolo County.

Why have I waited so long to respond? I wanted to be calm and thoughtful when I wrote this letter to the editor. We, the citizens of this county, need our supervisors to be mindful of costs before they make decisions that will affect the citizens of this county. We also need them to be caretakers and assume responsibility for county parks and lands. But, most of all, we need them to be respectful to individuals who give their time and effort to this county to make it a better place for all.

Kathy Harryman  
President Yolo County Historical Society