Solano Scene

Homes for the holidays

Festive abodes open their doors

By Susan Winlow
DAILY REPUBLIC

VACAVILLE — The warm, inviting foyer of Lu-Ann and Mark Chambers' refurbished 1922 home on Buck Avenue beckoned as soon as the door opened.

Right off the foyer, in the parlor, a fire glowed in the wood-burning fireplace, holiday-scented candles warmed the room and the beautifully-lit Christmas tree stood elegantly in the hexagonal music alcove fronted by a bay window.

The Chambers were just one of seven Vacaville families who opened up their homes Saturday to celebrate the holidays with the Vacaville Museum Guild's 2009 Holiday Home Tour.

The homes, scattered throughout Vacaville, rang in the holiday season in numerous ways. Some opted for elegant, some a combination of elegance and playful, while others displayed vast holiday collections. But all gave off the vibrant cheer of the impending holiday.

"It's always fun to see what peoples' collections are," said Tiffany Swanson. "I just bought a house in Dixon, so it's nice to get some ideas as to how people decorate."

Swanson and her mother, Karen Swanson of Vacaville, have been going on home tours sponsored by the Vacaville Museum Guild for about 10 years, Tiffany Swanson said.

"I like to look at the historical aspect of the home," Karen Swanson said.

Down the road on Buck Avenue is the Eichler-style home of Deborah and Brian Stevens. Deborah Stevens said she always decorates expansively for the holidays and her home shows her holiday spirit.

From a life-size Santa Claus that greets visitors in the home's entry way to the Christmas-clad guest bathroom with its Santa toilet seat cover, the house captures both a playful and an elegant feeling. The formal dining room table is set for 10 in a matching holiday silver serenade to honor the 25th anniversary of the museum and its guild. Live green garland mixed with lights and Christmas balls is placed gracefully throughout the home, and, holding center court, the large flocked Christmas tree, already surrounded by gifts, awaits Deborah Stevens' family.

"My grandchildren are coming home for Christmas and I'm so excited," she said.

For more information on the Vacaville Museum and its events, go to http://www.VacavilleMuseum.org.

Reach Susan Winlow at 427-6955 or swinlow@dailyrepublic.net.

Vacaville Museum

Vacaville Museum memberships are currently buy one, get one free. Membership prices range from $50 to $145. Additional information can be found at www.VacavilleMuseum.org or 447-4513.

Adam Smith/Daily Republic

People admire the holiday decor of a house on Buck Avenue in Vacaville Saturday as part of the holiday home tour, which featured seven homes decorated for the holidays.

Vaca facilities for needy to expand

By Ian Thompson
DAILY REPUBLIC

VACAVILLE — The Opportunity House Thrift Center and the Vacaville Storehouse will soon move to new, larger locations that will allow them to serve more of Vacaville's needy.

The Thrift Center, which supports the Opportunity House homeless shelter, is moving to what was once the Stupid Prices store near the north end of Peabody Road.

The Vacaville Storehouse, which distributes food and clothing to the needy, is moving a couple of doors down from its present location to 1146 E. Monte Vista Ave.

Both programs' directors are excited about the moves.

"We will be going from 3,000 square feet to about 10,000 square feet. This will allow us to also have additional storage and some classroom space for our clients. It lets us do so much more for our clients and the community," Opportunity House Executive Director Colleen Erdes said.

"We are very excited about our new home," Vacaville Storehouse Director Bob Johnson said. "Not only because it's a larger facility, but we will be able to stay more organized."

The Opportunity House governing board recently approved the Thrift Store's move. Erdes said she hopes to open up the new location in early January.

The Peabody Road site gives the store much more visibility than its present home at 640 E. Main St.

"We are hoping this will result in a 25 percent increase in business for us," Erdes said. "It's a lofty goal, but it is better location."

More space means the store can display furniture and offer a larger selection of clothing and other items.

"We are also planning to expand our hours a bit to seven days a week and staying open on Tuesday nights," Erdes said.

This comes at a time when the Opportunity House is making plans with the help from the Vacaville Redevelopment Agency to move the shelter to larger accommodations on Bennett Hill Court.

The agency wants to move the shelter so it can advance plans to redevelop the area around the shelter's Catherine Street site to a mixed-use development.

The Vacaville Storehouse is within a week of opening in the former Goodyear Tire Center, which is 1,200 square feet larger than its present location.

Johnson hopes to have a soft opening sometime between Thursday and Saturday.

"Because of an increase in our clients as a direct result of our economy, it is needed," Johnson said.

The larger building will also allow the town's homeless to get afternoon meals at the Storehouse instead of in Andrews Park where they are being fed now.

Initially, the Storehouse's hours of operation will stay the same, "but in January, we are hoping to be open an additional evening," Johnson said.

The present hours are from 9 a.m. to noon Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, and from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

"We hope to have a grand opening soon to allow the city to get better acquainted with us," Johnson said.

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Chris Jordan/Daily Republic

Janet Peel, left, and Shauna Scudder look at jewelry at the Opportunity House Thrift store in Vacaville. The store will be moving to a new location on Peabody Road.

Suisun City eyes signs to drive more motorists into town

By Ian Thompson
DAILY REPUBLIC

SUISUN CITY — An electronic reader board and murals on buildings facing Highway 12 are among the ideas the Suisun City Council will mull over Tuesday when it looks at ways to get more motorists to stop in town.

A council ad hoc committee has come forward with a half dozen ideas to improve public signs in and around the city's downtown.

Council members are expected to discuss the ideas and tell city staff which ones they should pursue.

The top proposal is to replace the event sign at Pennsylvania Avenue and Highway 12 with an electronic reader board that allows City Hall to update event information more often.

A sign specifically announcing the waterfront would also be put by the Suisun train station.

The committee also proposes to put a large waterfront district logo on the north side of the city water tank facing the railroad near Highway 12 and Marina Boulevard.

Murals promoting the downtown for the Family Cookie Company building and retaining walls on the Highway 12 flyway also made the list.

Funding will come from $265,000 that was already budgeted this year to improve gateway and wayfinding signs.

Suisun City has been looking for ways to increase its visibility and get people to dine and shop on the city's waterfront businesses as well as attend events.

Earlier this year, the council finally got Caltrans to put up more descriptive freeway exit signs.

The Suisun City Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District got into the act in October 2008 when it painted a 65-foot-high blue sign on the water tank facing Highway 12.

Reach Ian Thompson at 427-6976 or ithompson@dailyrepublic.net.

At a glance

Who: Suisun City Council
What: Discussion of ways to improve public signs along Highway 12 to bring more people into town.
When: 7 p.m. Tuesday.
Where: Suisun City Council chamber, 701 Civic Center Blvd.
Info: 421-7300

In brief

State crews plan work in I-80 in Vacaville

VACAVILLE — Interstate 80 nighttime lane closures for Mason Street bridge repairs have been rescheduled to next week.

All but one lane of eastbound I-80 could be closed from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday and Tuesday, a state Department of Transportation press release said. The work had initially been scheduled for this week.

Also, the far right lane and sidewalk of northbound Mason Street could be closed from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 17, the press release said.

Diabetes discussion planned Monday

FAIRFIELD — The local Area Agency on Aging will have a free in-depth discussion Monday of the dangers and prevention of diabetes.

The event will be from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Fairfield Senior Center at 1200 Civic Center Drive. It will take place in the Arts and Crafts Room at the center.

For more information, call 429-6291.

Congratulations Callie Artis

Fairfield Nursing & Rehab Center is proud to acknowledge Callie Artis for her hard work and dedication in her therapy program.
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Photo: Left to right - La Teshia Dartez, Certified Nursing Assistant; Callie Artis, Patient; Marrissa Smith, Certified Nursing Assistant.

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