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Saratoga News

Posted: 12/30/2009 06:35:54 PM PST

Updated: 12/30/2009 06:41:56 PM PST

As people start to put the Christmas decorations away and New Year's resolutions begin to go into effect, we are reminded that another year has passed and a new one lay before us. But before we look to the year ahead, there is still time to reflect on all that the past year brought with it.

Things looked good in Saratoga this year, despite the tough economic times, and there was a lot to celebrate. First, after nearly 40 years of heated discussions, long meetings and hard feelings when it came to Kevin Moran Park, Saratogans finally came together for the park's grand opening celebration in July.

The contentious issue of what to do with the North Campus was also put to rest when the campus held its grand opening in October. After years of turmoil and frustrations, the Prospect Road property that Saratogans overwhelmingly voted to keep a few years ago has a new building, new hours of operation and now a new name — Saratoga Prospect Center.

Saratogans also celebrated this year when the 172-year-old Sam Cloud Barn was rehabilitated after three painstaking years and the efforts of hundreds of people. Those efforts even won the builders, Saratogan Craig Awbrey and his business partner, Bob Hausmann, an award from the State Bar of California Construction Subsection for 2008 Sustainable Building of the Year.

This year was also one that saw Saratogans marking several significant anniversaries around the city. Former teachers and students came together in October to celebrate Saratoga High School's 50th anniversary. The Brookside Swim and Tennis Club of Saratoga and The Saratoga Swim Club also celebrated 50th anniversaries.

The development of the beloved village was a hot topic this year when developers David Rossi and Gary Naillon met with the city council, planning commission and about 35 members of the public at a special study session in late May to discuss their proposal for the Saratoga Village Center. The duo unveiled plans that proposed the construction of a shopping center that included two-story townhouses on top of the center's retail shops on the ground floor.

The tough economic times didn't bypass Saratoga all together, though. The message received during the Saratoga City Council budget discussion was that times were rough and the city should prepare for the worst. In a response to declining revenue, the community development department eliminated two positions, along with contract and consulting services. The Saratoga Recreation Department also eliminated one vacant staff position and reduced one full-time position to part time.

But despite the tough times, many Saratogans excelled and made names for themselves this year. Eleven-year-old Jordan Vogel reached new heights in bouldering when he came in third in his age group at the Northern California Youth Regional Bouldering competition in January. Saratoga High School sophomores Matt Cresci, Gabe Guido and Alex Sturge won a business plan development contest at Camp BizSmart and headed off to New York in May to attend the World Innovation Forum. Saratogan Jim Bailey was honored by the Red Cross for saving the life of young Erica Rix, whose hand was severed in an accident last year. Sacred Heart School teacher Jessica Schelegle was named the Comcast SportsNet Bay Area's 2009 All-Star Teacher, winning her school a \$10,000 prize. And all Saratogans were recognized when Forbes magazine named Saratoga one of the most educated small towns in America.

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It took three painstaking years and the effort of hundreds of people to complete, but the 172-year-old Sam Cloud barn was rehabilitated by Saratogan Craig Awbrey and his business partner, Bob Hausmann. The new building was designed to match the old barn. The windows were constructed in the same place as they were when the building was originally built in the 1880s, and the color of the old barn, a pale yellow, has stayed the same. The effort won the two men an award from the State Bar of California Construction Subsection for 2009 Sustainable Building of the Year.

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