

COMMUNITY'S HIDDEN TREASURE

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By Carol Bower Foote

Last week, we wrote about the recommendation of R/UDAT and others that keeping the heartbeat of Rio Vista life and services downtown builds community. Community is a sense of belonging to a larger whole, of being in relationship with neighbor, town and region, bringing diversity together through shared experiences and mutual support. It is vital to our personal and civic well-being.

On December 2nd, I felt deep appreciation for our community as I walked Rio Vista streets and talked to people during my visits to the Soroptimist Christmas Tree Raffle display, Christmas Faire at the Rio Vista Museum, decorated homes in Trilogy and historic houses of core Rio Vista on the RioVision 2017 Holiday Home Tour, and later stood with other town folk for the Hospice Tree Lighting and Lighted Boat Parade. I heard stories from members of families who have settled in Rio Vista for generations, who grew up and/or did business with members of similar families. Newcomers shared their interesting backgrounds and the various reasons that drew them to this town. I asked questions of volunteers, crafters, and artists who invest a great deal of their personal time to enhance and improve our shared lives here. I joined the gathering of delighted citizens of all ages on a dark, chilly night. Together we shared the beauty of brightly colored lights coming alive on the Hospice tree and reflecting on calm river waters from parading lighted boats. Everyone I spoke with shared some form of love for this town as well as something they had invested themselves in here that mattered to them. *(Photo: Hamilton house HHT display)*

As I walked city streets I had never been down before, I found myself noticing the beauty and diversity of homes built in different eras that mark the evolution of this city. I took in the view of the river and bridge from the top of St. Gertrude Avenue. I felt a sense of neighborhood, and enjoyed speaking with Dutra Museum of Dredging Co-Director Janet Bennett about a time when the families who owned and operated the downtown businesses were neighbors who supported one another, how the children of these families lived down the street from one another and played together in "old Rio Vista". At the Hamilton home, I asked about the beautiful Santa collection with lifelike faces that appeared there. Darryl Brown, a retired nurse, told stories about his collection of medical, apothecary, and pharmaceutical historical artifacts on display at his St. Gertrude Avenue home. I witnessed a Rio Vista High School Cheerleader, posted at the steps of a home on the tour, providing assistance to assure that a guest did not fall. I heard stories from RioVision and Soroptimist volunteers who spent countless hours decorating and preparing to make the Home Tour and Tree Raffle events to remember. As I picked out a hand knit cap for a child's birthday and talked with the crafters at the Old Tyme Christmas Faire, I shared the joy of local children proudly sporting their new caps and reveling in the colorful holiday magic of rich displays of all sorts of handcrafted goods.

(Photo: Janet Bennett shares history of Dutra museum as a home)

In these experiences, I established connections. In those connections, I felt a sense of community with all of its hidden treasure...its talent, its stories, its diversity, its history, its surprises.

Speaking of treasure, RioVision also extends our heartiest congrats to the RVHS Football team on their recent accomplishment! "Go Rams – you've "done our city proud"!!! Thank you, Rio Vista community, for supporting them!

ALTERNATE PHOTOS for article:



HHT SANTA:



JANET BENNETT:

