

# California Nursery: *The Boxed Oak Trees*

BY CHARLENE DIZON  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
JOYCE BLUEFORD

Native Coast Live Oak trees were once abundant in the San Francisco Bay Area. California Nursery of Niles in Fremont not only grew these large trees but sold them. Today, California Nursery Historical Park contains an area of large 100-year-old oaks in boxes. These trees are a testament to the effort put forth in keeping the nursery's business thriving.

In the 1950s and late 1960s, California Nursery endured financial difficulties. The company went through a series of bankruptcies, and debt seemed impossible to pay off. The market continued to change and developers made offers to purchase the nursery land and convert it into residential homes. George Roeding Jr. took out a loan from the Lloyd Berry Foundation due to these hardships. Lloyd Berry was a fellow Rotarian of George Roeding Jr. who held a charitable trust making money through selling fertilizer. As the loan's maturity date neared, George Roeding Jr. attempted to find a way to pay it off, starting with the large oak trees that were already on the property.

California Nursery was known on the West Coast for its large oak trees. On Block 9 of the nursery land, stood several oak trees roughly twenty years old. George Roeding Jr. moved these closer to the



various trees. Those who made purchases spent about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per tree. Despite the financial benefit of the live oaks, California Nursery was still unable to fully pay back its loan to the Berry Foundation. The nursery's properties outside of Niles were lost to fulfill



residence. Twenty out of the sixty acres of land were put aside for parks and transferred to the City of Fremont. That twenty acres of nursery land is now California Nursery Historical Park.

To this day, the boxed forest remains in its original area. The surviving oak trees were boxed by the Roeding family to make space for the neighborhood construction. These original boxes ultimately withered away and the trees grew into the ground once again until the City of Fremont made park repairs in the late 1990s, including creating new boxes for the trees. Local volunteer Jill Singleton honored the original box designs and created a new plan. City employee of building maintenance, Bill Marshall, rebuilt all of the boxes and had them installed for the trees in 2002.

From here, Fremont's Naka Nursery rented the nursery land from the City of Fremont. They maintained all of the park's plants and trees. However, after their closure in 2009, maintenance grew scarce. Over half of the historic trees died due to a lack of water. Thankfully, in 2011 non-profit organization Math Science

Nucleus (MSN) volunteered to preserve the remaining trees. New soil was placed inside of the boxed trees. MSN worked alongside Richard Valle, Union City President of Tri-City Economic Development Corporation (Tri-CED) Community Recycling, who coordinated with one of the local community colleges to employ youth volunteers. Twenty young men learned how to irrigate, dig trenches, compost, and a variety of other green skills necessary in conserving the park.

Today, the boxed oak trees remain in the same area. Unfortunately, only the native Coast Live Oaks remain. The City of Fremont staff and council must work together to ensure that the park does not perish. Both funds and focus on maintenance are required to preserve the California Nursery's property and history. With the help of local volunteers within the community, the trees remaining and the land itself can be properly nourished and cared for.

For more information on volunteer opportunities or becoming a historical docent, please contact the Math Science Nucleus at [msn@msnucleus.org](mailto:msn@msnucleus.org).



nursery's retail area to encourage clients to purchase them. The oak trees were only boxed once officially sold; however, George thought it would entice buyers to have them ready to go. Boxing trees that were originally in the ground could take up to one year. Once boxed, the trees would then be carried off in trucks.

Various types of trees were boxed, from coast live oaks to cedars, redwoods, and even pine trees. Placing the boxed oak trees closer to the retail area made a positive impact. Clients grew interested in the

remaining loan obligations. Berry passed on the unfulfilled loan note to the Singer Housing Corporation. In 1971, the Singer Corporation foreclosed under CEO Jack Brooke, who acquired the remaining 60 acres of the nursery property.

The Singer Corporation planned to build a housing division on the nursery land. However they first needed to secure a permit from the City of Fremont. The City required that they issue acreage for a public park in their plans, as each city was required to have a ratio of parks to



## South Bay Amateur Radio Association continues field day during pandemic

SUBMITTED BY WILLIAM E. ARTELT

CQ Field Day, CQ Field Day, Kilo United Six Sierra CQ Field Day. The familiar calling phrase of Amateur Radio Club Callsign KU6S – which has members from all over Fremont and the surrounding area – will have a different meaning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our annual emergency communication gathering, Field Day, operating on the grounds of Lake Elizabeth has changed.

This year, Field Day will adhere to local, State, and National social distancing guidelines while operating. Following the Amateur Radio Relay League or ARRL, Rules of Operation for Field Day, SBARA Club members will practice and operate the two-day event from individual Club Member's residences.

To power our transceivers, commercial, solar, or battery power will be used to contact Operators around the US during our annual Emergency preparedness exercise. In addition, members will attempt to contact the ISS and Amateur Radio Satellites orbiting above the Earth. Operating from our residences guarantees that we all will follow Social Distancing Guidelines and the changes in the ARRL rules for Field Day.

This year our club score will be an accumulation of all member contacts for submission to the ARRL.

Field Day is the fourth weekend in June - this year, Saturday June 27 – Sunday, June 28. To learn more about



Amateur Radio, contact SBARA via our Website [www.sbara.org](http://www.sbara.org) and the ARRL website at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

**SBARA Field Day**  
Saturday, Jun 27 – Sunday, Jun 28  
Virtual event  
[www.sbara.org](http://www.sbara.org)