

We are concerned by the misconceptions being spread and hyperbolic claims made by some in our community regarding YoloArts and the Yolo County Historical Museum--Gibson House. Immediately following the Yolo County Board of Supervisors' unanimous vote to transition management of the Gibson House to YoloArts on December 12, a campaign of misinformation began. We want to set the record straight.

First and foremost, YoloArts is not going to destroy Gibson House. We intend to preserve the historically valuable elements of the house and property.

The plan we presented to the Board of Supervisors describes how we would incorporate and highlight the significant historical relevance of the Gibson family, the museum property, and those pioneers who founded our County.

The County will hire an expert in museum collections--a new position funded by Yolo County--who will review and manage the treasured museum pieces. The museum expert and collections committee will determine which items need restoration. This will be no small task; more than 11,000 museum pieces are stored currently at the House, unprotected from weather and temperature changes. In addition, there are many interesting and significant pieces that have not been seen by the public for years. Following collection review the museum expert would work to bring the relevant pieces to the public, through a traveling exhibit or other means.

It is worth noting that current Gibson House programs like the school tours and Gibson gardeners will continue and be expanded to accommodate more participants. The Gibson House and property will remain open to the public.

We've heard from certain members of the community that we are simply going to turn Gibson House into an exhibit hall. Let's be clear: YoloArts has no plans to rip up carpeting and wallpaper to make way for a gallery. We will continue the display of historic objects, as the interior will continue to be reflective of a historic home. YoloArts will build on the incredible legacy established by the Gibson House Museum Board and create new opportunities for all Yolo County residents.

YoloArts will continue to maintain Gallery 625 and participate in Woodland's Art Walk. We will continue to coordinate our arts education programs and other community-oriented activities. Our vision for future programming includes additional art education programs for all ages, expanded resources and support for artists in many disciplines and art organizations in Yolo County. We anticipate many countywide collaborations to engage the larger community in the rich cultural history of Yolo County, as well as, expanded performance venues for history exhibitions and lecture on the grounds, and in the barns and the Gibson House.

We do want to make sure all members of our community can enjoy the House and property. ADA improvements to the property are a key focus during the transition.

It is our hope that the detractors, who are angry with the Board of Supervisors' unanimous decision, will work with us. We are honored to be able to manage and strengthen the Gibson House legacy. We are interested in the communities' ideas about having a meaningful and respectful discussion about working together in the coming months and years. We are committed to a countywide conversation and collaboration to ensure that we build on the heritage of this important historical home and the 35+ years of YoloArts' organization.

In short, we are dedicated to preserving the Gibson House — a Yolo County gem—while creating a vibrant space where history and culture come alive for people of all ages. We want new generations to visit the property, interact with it, contribute to it, and return to it.

We appreciate the passion that many in our community have for the Gibson House and property. We hope that the facts we have provided here can serve as an opening to constructive dialogue. Let us all reinforce the Gibson House legacy for generations to come.

Signed,

YoloArts Board of Directors

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