

# The Novato Historian

The Quarterly Publication of the Novato Historical Guild, the Novato History Museum, and the Hamilton Field History Museum

*Preserving Novato's History*

**News Section**



July - September 2015

The Novato Historian

Volume 39, Number 3

## Dedicated Docents

by Pat Johnstone



Hamilton Field museum docents John Knebel and Rudy Picarelli

If you visit the Hamilton Field History Museum on the fourth Thursday of the month you will meet two very informative and interesting docents who can answer all of your aviation questions and talk about their WWII experiences.

John Knebel, a young 94 year old, has been a docent at the museum since opening day in 2010. He has a great sense of humor and a remarkable memory.

John is a retired USAF Lt. Colonel who served 8 years of active duty and 13 years as a reserve officer with the Air Force. After WWII, he served as a test pilot for 15 years and then he became a pilot for Trans International Airlines. He lives in Bel Marin Keys with his wife Marie.

Rudy Picarelli is 96 years old and has been a docent at the museum since 2011. He is a retired USAF Lt. Colonel who served in the Air Force for 30 years. When Rudy was stationed at Hamilton Field he was Director of Personnel and his office

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Third grade docents rode on the NHG float in the 4th of July parade. Michael Silva was the float driver and Bill Damon was the navigator. Tom Keena decorated the float with art done by third grade students.



In July the NHG board and friends took a field trip to the Tomales Regional History Center in the west Marin town of Tomales.

## The Novato Historian

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### Guild Mission Statement

*Our Mission is to collect, preserve, and make reasonably available to the public, exhibits and information related to the historical and social development of the Novato valley, Hamilton Field, and the adjacent North Marin area.*

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**Deadline for the Dec. issue is Nov. 1**

### Address Changes

*The Novato Historian is mailed by bulk mail and will not be forwarded by the Postal Service. Please notify us promptly of your address change at Novato Historical Guild, P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.*



## President's Corner

Susan Magnone

It's summertime and the living for the Novato Historical Guild has been busy. As usual we had a booth at the Novato Festival in June. Roland Fuelle and Tom Keena set it up, Pat Johnstone arranged items to sell including, historic pictures of Novato, and Jim Crumpler got volunteers to staff the booth. What is impressive is that we always have people of all ages come in and buy tee shirts or ask questions or tell stories about Novato. The most popular thing was looking at the historic pictures and trying to figure out where they were taken or tell a story about their life in Novato. History is interesting to people of all ages and walks of life and connects us as members of the community.

Another history connection the Guild provided was our float in the 4th of July Parade. Tom Keena decorated the float (thank you Tom) with large drawings of the City Hall and the Novato Museum done by third grade students after a tour. Five of the third grade docents, in costume, rode on the float. (See picture on page N4). They had a great time and made it fun with flags and bluegrass music.

Both the Novato and the Hamilton Field History Museums received a lot

of publicity this summer. First, the two museums, along with the four other museums in Novato, were in an ad in a Sunday *Chronicle* special section on Marin. Jim Crumpler put that ad together. In addition our two museums are listed on the Super Bowl 50 web site under **50 Perfect Hours in Novato**. You don't have to go to the Super Bowl to use it. It's very helpful to those of us living in Novato. See it at <http://www.sfbaysuperbowl.com/2015/05/50-perfect-hours-novato/#x5kH7uA4ScJW9bpo.97>.

Both of these items have spread the word about Novato's museums throughout the Bay Area.

Looking forward, fall will bring new exhibits at both museums and a new photo display on our web site. Michael Corlett has compiled a set of photos of famous visitors to Hamilton Field. You can see them at our website, [novatohistory.org](http://novatohistory.org). Click on "History," then click "Prominent Visitors to Hamilton Air Field."

Be sure to include a visit to both the Hamilton Field and Novato History Museums in your Fall plans. It won't take 50 hours but it will be interesting and fun.





# Novato-50 Years Ago

## (July, August, and September 1965)

by Bill Almeida and Tonie Brown

*“Novato 50 Years Ago” is a collection of items culled by Bill Almeida from the July, August, and September issues of the Novato Advance newspapers in the collection of the Novato History Museum and the Novato Advance. Tonie Brown retypes the articles for the newsletter. Enjoy reading the names and happenings of 1965.*

- The Novato Advance celebrated its 43rd year of publication the first week of July. Careful readers of the Advance noted under the name plate the volume number (43) and issue number one.
- Kenneth J. Morrison resigned from the city parks and recreation commission in early July saying he could no longer give sufficient time to commission work. He joined the commission on October 10, 1963 and his term was to have run until Dec. 31, 1966.
- Wayne Womack opened the doors of Womack’s Fabrics in the Tresch Triangle the second week of July. This was the first store in the second unit of the Tresch Triangle wing opened two years ago. Occupants in the first unit were Harley McAskill’s Men’s Wear, Chapman’s Shoes, and Tresch Electric. Jolly Market opened earlier in the year across the parking lot.
- Heavy equipment moved through the hills of Bahia making a road that would lead to “Bahia del Norte”. Development was planned on Petaluma Creek and Black John Slough. Brown-Nave Contractors

of San Rafael was the contractor for paving, curbs and sidewalks.

- The Pinheiro Ranch property, Marion School, the Hanna Trust property, and two city blocks were some of the sites discussed for a future Novato Civic Center. A civic center report was received by the city council on July 27 and a special meeting was scheduled for August 5.
- The Ignacio Land Company, listing Richard Hanna of San Francisco as its president, filed plans with the county calling for development of an 18-hole golf course alongside Highway 101 north of State Route 37.
- The Reverend Lloyd F. Gebhart of Atascadero was appointed vicar of St. Francis Episcopal Church in Novato. His first service here was on August 1.
- At the Sonoma County Fair Junior Livestock Auction, Kathy Marzell of Novato received the highest price paid for lambs, \$2.25 per pound for her 92 pound 4-H champion crossbred lamb.
- Richard Nave assumed the president’s gavel for the second consecutive year at the Chamber of Commerce annual installation dinner at The Lodge motel-restaurant on July 31. Nave pledged the Chamber would never be “bossed” by a Government body.
- Jim Hallstrom of Novato smashed his car into a retaining wall at the Petaluma hard top races on July 31 at the fairgrounds in Petaluma. He was

taken by ambulance to a hospital but reportedly was only shaken up.

- McAfee’s department store opened August 12 in the Nave Shopping Center on South Novato Blvd and Center Road. The department store carried the name of 40-year old Harold R. McAfee, its owner. Spread over 18,000 square feet of space, the department store carried a full line of goods ranging from clothing through appliances and furniture. NOTE: The store is now occupied by the main Novato post office.
- San Quentin Prison was advertising for men between the ages of 21 and 45 who were interested in becoming correctional officers.
- The rioting at Watts reached out to touch at least two Novatans, Cliff Temps, an assistant civil engineer with the city public works department and Richard Scott of the local post office. Both men went to Los Angeles with the National Guard in mid-August.
- Joseph A. Forest, 32-year old Novato attorney, was named deputy county counsel by the board of Supervisors on August 17. Forest became an assistant to County Counsel Douglas J. Maloney who recommended him for the post.
- Novato’s All-Stars took the Northern California Little League championship and were scheduled to play in Portland, Oregon in the leagues Western Divisional meet.

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## 50 Years Ago

*Continued from Page N-3*

- Dr. John Elloway became associated with the Novato Medical Clinic at 1324 Grant Avenue in August. Dr. Elloway was a graduate of Loma Linda University and a general practitioner. He joined Drs. Ralph Weseman, Merton Shelton and Ralph Maddox at the clinic.
- Robert Nolan and Sally Jane McDermott were married August 14 at Chapel No. 1, Hamilton Air Force Base. Chaplain Howard Scholten officiated at the 2 o'clock single-ring rites. The bride was a teacher with the local school district. The groom was a teacher in San Francisco.
- Ray Leach, 15-year old Novato golfer, was defeated on the 20th hole by Lane Bennett, 19, of Pebble Beach in the first round of the Northern California Golf Association junior tournament held August 17 at the Presidio of San Francisco. The two favored players shot 69s, three under par, for the first 18 holes. Both parred the 19th Leach had a bogey five while Bennett broke even on the 20th hold.
- A black 75-pound "member of the cat family" was the object of a search by Novato police in the hills behind Dickson Drive in Rafael Village. Air police from Hamilton joined in the search but nothing was found.
- An August 24 meeting to consider parallel parking on Grant Avenue was temporarily shelved following strong public opposition. Many who objected spoke in favor of diagonal parking. A further study was to be made by the city's traffic committee.
- The doors of the Village Inn, a familiar landmark along Highway 101 since 1913-14, closed the end

of August after tavern owner, Dave Grandall, sold the liquor license. He had operated the tavern for 12 years. The property and building belong to Charmaine B. Veronda and her husband, Anthony, of Petaluma. Mrs. Veronda is the direct descendant of two famous pioneer Novato Families – the Sweetsers and the Burdells.

- The new Pleasant Valley Elementary School of twelve classrooms and two kindergarten rooms was partially ready for use by September 13. A strike by painters delayed the completion date. The school was to be ready for full use on October 1.
- Among the interested observers of the two "topless" female caddies at the Roman Carnival in early September at the Marin Golf Club was Mayor Robert Carrow of Novato. One of the "topless" girls, imports from San Francisco, later was part of a dunk tank money-raising project. Police Chief Robert DiGrazia growled "if we (the police) had received a protest, there would have been a couple of naked cats arrested". Nobody at the golf course

was outraged at the show.

- Young Bros. store opened in early September. Located at the corner of Highway 101 and Olive Avenue, the store featured furniture, appliances and television and stereo sets. The store was owned by the four Young brothers, Bernie, Joe, Hal and Dave.
- Ignacio Cervarich, 83, a resident of School Lane from 1921 to 1964, died at Mt. Zion hospital in San Francisco on September 24. A poultry raiser, he belonged to the Poultry Producers of Central California and was a member of the San Rafael Fraternal Order of Eagles.
- Funeral services were held September 27 for Richard E. Rush, 55, who died at Novato General Hospital after a short illness. Mr. Rush was owner of Rush Construction Company and had been a Novato resident for the past nine years. Survivors included his wife, Paragina; sons James and Richard E. Rush, Jr.; daughters Shirley Genetin and Jacqueline Rush of Novato.



*Third grade docents, Laurie O'Mara, Sharon Azevedo, Celinda Current, Susan Trumbull, and Anne Russell rode on the NHG float in the 4th of July parade.*

# Novato Memories

by Jim McNern



## Sandra Glass Purdom

*Sandra Glass Purdom grew up in Novato. She attended Novato Grammar School and graduated from Marion School in 1952. Sandy was active in 4-H for many years. She now lives in Seattle, Washington and occasionally visits the Bay Area to visit family and friends. Sandy shares her Novato memories in this September issue of the Novato Historian.*

I was born in San Francisco at Saint Mary's Hospital in 1938. In 1940 when I was two years old my family moved to Novato. I remember my first playmate was Claudette Borloz. We lived just down the road from her family on McClay Road. Up the road were the families of DeLucchi, Ambrosini, Deny, Kingsley, McNern, Burgi, and Orr.

When I was about six years old we moved to our partially finished home at the corner of McClay Road and Center Lane (Center Road was called "Lane" back then). We had four acres of land which eventually was planted with fruit trees, walnut trees, grapes and tomatoes. The bathroom was not completed yet so I had to take baths in the kitchen in a big galvanized tub! The stairway to the upstairs floor was a ladder.

Dr. Ralph Weseman was the doctor in town with an office on Grant Avenue. If you were very ill he would actually make house calls. After my brother was born, Dr. Weseman had to climb the ladder upstairs, carrying his

satchel, to check on the health of my brother.

Our part of town had no curbs or sidewalks. I used to roller skate on McClay Road. During hot summer days the road became pretty bumpy for skates due to the asphalt heating up and becoming soft.

Occasionally, during the summer we got invited to swim in the Dwelly's swimming pool, one of only three in Novato that I can remember. That was always a wonderful treat. The other pools were at Weseman's and Robertson's. The Robertson's Turkey Farm was just down the road from my home.

Soon I met another playmate, Judy Johnson. She moved from San Francisco with her family Alta and Archie Johnson and sister Jean. Their house was right next door to ours. Judy and I became friends and to this day still keep in touch and see each other about once a year. I went through grades 1-12 with both Judy Johnson and Claudette Borloz.

I started first grade at Novato Grammar School in 1944. There was no Kindergarten. Mrs. Hulme was my teacher. Other teachers I had at this school were Miss Dalessi, Mrs. Olson, Miss Backus, Mrs. Johnston and Mrs. Page. Miss Lulu Sutton was the principal, and a very strict disciplinarian! We played on the merry-go-round and rings and bars during lunch and recess. On May Day we celebrated with a May Pole dance, walking around a pole decorating it with crepe paper streamers.

I started sixth grade in a brand new school, Marion Street School. Just off the classroom there was a garden area where our class planted flowers and vegetables, tending them as they grew.

Mrs. Estes was my teacher. If you didn't know how to spell something she would always say "look it up." Mr. Laveroni and Mr. Slepnikoff were my seventh and eighth grade teachers. Miss Sutton taught our eighth grade class English Grammar and the art of diagramming sentences. She also taught the Constitution.

Other classmates and friends I had were: Valerie Schwindt, Sharon Smith, Jeanette Hansen, Hannah Lausmann, Catherine Lindley, John Kingsley, Joan Smith, Erline Porter, Vern Dwelly, Glen Wilfert, Delaine Zanco, Annabel Swank, Juliet Lee, Marlene Guibbini, Barbara Milano, Joan Ridell, Carol Thum, Fern Weseman, Becky Hamilton, Don Edwards and Walt Nolan.

One particular memory I have of Claudette Borloz is when we were in Mr. Laveroni's seventh grade class. Claudette and I sat right next to each other and would frequently get the "giggles." One time the giggling got so bad it disrupted the class and Mr. Laveroni asked Claudette to please step outside. I don't know how I got so lucky to be able to remain in class.

My eighth grade class was the last class of students to graduate in the Novato Community House in June 1952.

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# Novato Memories

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One summer I received a Hawthorne two-wheel bicycle for my birthday. I was then able to ride my bike all around Novato to visit friends.

Saturday morning matinees at the Novato Theater were always a treat. A lot of the movies were cliff-hangers so I had to go back the following Saturday to find out how the movie ended.

The Novato Drug Store, located at the corner of Grant and Highway 101 had a soda fountain. I liked to go in and order milkshakes or soft drinks, like a cherry or lemon Coke.

I started at the age of nine, as a junior member of Novato 4-H club. My first project was sewing. Meetings were held in the Club Car, an old railroad car located between the Presbyterian Church and the Community House. 4-H was a great activity for young people. We kept books logging in what we were doing at the time in our various 4-H projects.

I learned to sew on a treadle sewing machine right in the Club Car. The very first garment I made was a laundry bag, then advanced up to a skirt, and of course my green collar and cuffs for my 4-H uniform. Some of my leaders were Mrs. Lieb, Mrs. Deny, Mrs. Johnson and my mother, Glenna Glass. Cooking and Home Furnishing were two more of my projects. I entered the clothing garments I made into the Marin County Exhibit Days and Marin-Sonoma County fairs. I have all my awarded ribbons displayed in my home on a large 85" by 65" wall hanging I made.

There was an annual 4-H parade down Grant Avenue to kick off National 4-H Club Week. We had 4-H displays in the lobby of the First National Bank on Grant Avenue. Going to 4-H camp Las Posadas was another fun summer activity. I enjoyed one week full of swimming, hiking, campfires, skits, leather crafts, singing, and meeting 4-H members from other towns in Marin County.

The swimming pool at camp was extremely cold but it didn't seem to bother us. This is where I learned to swim.

One of the 4-H projects I remember was selling tickets for a "turkey basket" raffle. Another was handing out earwig bait to my neighbors.

My family owned the "Novato Creamery" on Grant Avenue (when they sold the Creamery it became The Parrot Cage). Our dessert at home was usually hand packed chocolate and vanilla ice cream every evening after dinner.

My grandparents, Glenn and Charlene Hatfield owned the Novato Delicatessen, next to Zunino's Shoe Repair, a few doors down from the creamery. My grandfather had the "first automatic doughnut making machine" north of the Golden Gate in the window and one could watch the doughnuts being made. My grandmother made delicious potato and macaroni salads to sell.

Some of the stores I recall shopping in were Rayburn's and Ascherman's grocery stores, Ben Franklin 5- and 10-cent store, Simmon's Meat Market. Mr. Simmons sometimes gave me a cold hotdog to snack on while my mother shopped.

Highway 101 went through downtown with only one stop light, that stopped traffic on Grant Avenue.

Families I remember growing up with are Borloz, Deny, Kingsley, Orr, McNern, Johnson, Gness, Zanco, Schwindt, Dwelly, Smith, Sandbach, Thompson, Howell, Edwards, Hansen, Burgi, Guibbini, Milano, Weseman, Riddell, Wilfert, Clemmer, McClelland and Nolan.

Sharon Smith and I both had horses that we would take out riding all day, discovering different areas of Novato, one being the Hill Ranch at the end of Wilson. Sharon's horse was named Bonnie, my horse was named Tony. I

belonged to the Novato Junior Horsemen's Club. We wore fluorescent pink shirts and hats that really stood out when we rode in the Western Weekend parade. After the parade we went to the rodeo out on Bugeia Lane, where we would ride our horses in a drill.

The Hi-Fi Drive-in, famous for their 19-cent hamburgers, was a hangout for teenagers. Some of my friends and I would pool our money, buy a gallon or so of gas for my car and go hang out and eat burgers and shakes. Another place we frequented was Burge's drive-in in Ignacio.

My first job was babysitting. One of my more frequent sitting jobs was the Moore family. They had six children. Major Moore was in the Air Force at Hamilton Field. I was paid fifty cents an hour!

One of my jobs was packing eggs at Bloom's chicken ranch on Indian Valley Road. This was a two-person job. One person would be at one end of the egg cleaning machine, putting eggs in six at a time, rolling through the machine and coming out on my end. I would then pack them in boxes. Have you ever seen an egg that did not harden? We had fun with those!

Another job I had was right next door at the Johnson's pear orchard. I picked pears and was paid 20 cents a lug. I learned to drive Mr. Johnson's tractor in the orchard. After the pears were picked, they were graded by size and sold to Del Monte.

I attended San Rafael High School from 1952-1956. Novato didn't have a high school so we took a school bus into San Rafael. The bus barn was on McClay Road. Judy Johnson and I would walk up in the morning to the bus barn. We were the first to get on the bus in the morning and the last to get off after school in the afternoon.

One of my favorite teachers was Mrs. Murray, the Latin teacher. I took

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# Novato Memories

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two years of Latin from her. She made the class interesting by having the class play "Vinco" a version of Bingo, where the numbers were all called out in Latin.

I received a portable typewriter for Christmas when I was in eighth grade. I covered up all the keys with adhesive tape so I could not see the letters and taught myself to type. By the time I got to high school and took typing from Miss Milliken, I was way ahead of the class. Typing was always a love of mine and it came in handy when I got my job with the telephone company.

I belonged to the Les Couits girl's club at San Rafael High. We had meetings in school and also fun outings like a weekend skiing at Soda Springs. My last year in high school I was the senior class secretary.

Some more of my memories from the 1950s include my poodle skirt, pedal pushers, a blue and gold Roos Atkins megaphone and reading Archie comic books.

During my junior year at San Rafael High School, I took a driving course. Mr. Faust was my instructor. I learned to drive on a 1954 Chevrolet, stick shift. The driving class started in San Rafael. Since I lived in Novato, after I got more experience at driving, I was able to drive home to Novato on Highway 101. I passed the tests and received my first driver's license at age 16 at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles out on Miracle Mile.

My first car was a 1942 Oldsmobile coupe. I purchased it for \$100 from Captain Clarkson who lived on Wilson Avenue. I had this car for a couple of years then traded it in for my red and white 1956 Chevrolet.

I graduated from San Rafael High on a Friday evening, June 18, 1956. The following Monday I started my job in San Francisco on New Montgomery Street. I worked for Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company as a

teletype operator for eight years in San Francisco. I commuted from Novato by Greyhound bus to the Ferry Building in San Francisco, along with other commuters, Harlan Frost and Earl Marshall. From the Ferry Building I walked the several blocks to the office on New Montgomery Street.

While still working in San Francisco, I had a job at the Novato Theater, then owned by Don Donahue. I worked as a cashier in the evening after I got home from San Francisco.

Judy Johnson and I rented my grandmother's house on Second Street in Novato for a short time. Tiring of commuting, Judy and I rented an apartment on Chestnut Street in the Marina District in San Francisco. Our rent was \$100 a month plus another \$10 a month for one parking spot in the garage. Judy and I took turns parking our car in that space. Judy had a 1958 Chevrolet and I had my 1956 Chevrolet.

I lived in San Francisco until 1964, then moved back to Novato until 1968. In 1968 my family moved to Seattle, Washington, where I continue to live now. I have two adult children, Laurie and Larry. They both live in Seattle so I see them quite frequently. My brother, Bill Glass, lives in Petaluma. Sisters Judy in Washington and Nancy in Minnesota. My husband, Brent Purdom (one of my first boyfriends) and I have been married since 1986.

I haven't lived in Novato since 1968, although I travel down to visit about once a year. I see many changes, one notably is the bypassing Novato on Highway 101. Novato as I knew it growing up was a great "small" town. I am so thankful that I had a chance to be a 4-H member and learn so much from the many dedicated leaders. Living out in the "country" as a kid was a great experience.

## In Memoriam

**There are no notices at this time**

### MEMORIAL PLAQUE GIFTS

You may honor a friend or loved one by having his or her name engraved on an individual brass plate on the Memorial Plaque in the History Museum. Please call the Museum at 897-4320. All contributions are tax deductible. Plaques cost \$250 per person named.

### MEMORIAL GIFTS

You may make a gift of appreciated securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds) to the Novato Historical Guild. Your gift is not only tax-deductible, but if you have held the shares for more than one year, your tax deduction will equal the full value of the securities on the date of the gift.

### 2015 Board Meetings

*Second Tuesday of the month*  
Margaret Todd Senior Center

1560 Hill Road  
Time: 1:30- 3:30 PM

Jan 13	July 14
Feb.10	Aug 11
March10	Sept 8
April 14	Oct 13
May 12	Nov 10
June 9	Dec 8

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Susan Magnone at [NHG@Yahoo.com](mailto:NHG@Yahoo.com) or 415 892-8458, in case a meeting has been changed.

# Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Kathryn Hansen

## May 2015

### New Business

*Accession Artifacts* – Susan Magnone – a number of artifacts were displayed and it was decided that they did not fit the criteria therefore will be de-accessioned.

*Oral History Project* – Susan Magnone – thirty four tapes have been transferred to CD. Question – how do we use them to tell the story? Many are over one hour long. A motion was made (Jim 1st, George 2nd) and passed to authorize \$300.00 toward a solution.

*Novato Art & Wine* – Jim Crumpler – requesting volunteers to man the NHG booth June 13th and 14th.

*June General Membership Meeting* – Jim Crumpler - at City Hall June 20th from 10AM to noon. The speaker will be Theresa Salazar from the Indian Museum. The topic will be Novato's archeology.

*July Field Trip* – Bill Damon – suggested we use the July meeting to tour the Tomales Museum. All agreed.

*Board Application* – Louise & Susan – have designed an application form and will notify Guild members that they can apply for next year's Board.

*4th of July Parade* – Tom Keena – will work on getting a float organized

### Old Business:

*Marin History Museum* – Bill & Pat – The San Quentin items discussed at last meeting were taken to the Marin Co. Free Library. Lori Thompson was very happy to add them to the collection in the California Room.

### Committee Reports & Updates

*Hamilton Museum* – Ray Dwelly – the audio walking tour has thirteen stations, equipment has been ordered.

*Downtown Museum* – Susan Magnone – the museum has some valuable impressionist paintings of Mt. Burdell and City Hall

## June 2015

*City Report* – Kathy Kormos – Dave Meyers (City EE) wasn't able to meet with Roland (out of town) regarding the bench design for the Downtown Museum. Action Item: Meeting to be set up.

The flag pole has been removed but the handrail has not been installed.

*October 12 – 26th is Family History month.* The banner will be over DeLong St. for two weeks.

The City is waiting for the inventory list from the two museums (one is complete).

### Old Business:

*Novato Festival of Art & Wine* – Jim – is still looking for volunteers. The booth will be #323 across from the Wells Fargo Bank.

*June Membership Meeting* – Susan – Set up at 9AM, Sheila needs volunteers to bake, Bill D. will have maps on display. The speaker will receive an honorarium of \$200.00. Edna will find some interesting items to display from the Downtown Museum. Sheila & Yvette will post announcements on the *Marin IJ*, *Novato Patch* and Facebook.

*4th of July Parade* – Tom – The theme is "Celebrating the Arts". It was suggested by Edna to take art submitted by the 3rd Grade Tour students, enlarging the art and hanging it on the truck. Louise and Bill will donate 3 vehicles. The banners will be put on the night before. Docents in costume and students will be on the truck.

*July Field Trip* – Bill – July 14th the Guild will get a tour of the

Tomales Museum by the Curator, Jenny. We will leave from the Margaret Todd Center at 10AM and car pool.

*Board Nominations* – Louise & Susan – August 15th is the deadline for applying for the Board 2016 term.

*Hamilton Museum* – Ray Dwelly – hosted the Park & Recreation Dept's. lecture series. Susan spoke about the museums. The museum had 32 visitors in one day; which was the most people ever except for tour groups.

*Downtown Museum* – Susan Magnone – Exhibit Committee is exploring what type of technology would be best suited for exhibits with the least amount of space. It would have to include sound and images.

The Oral History Project is not complete, but all the restricted funds have been used. The estimate is \$1,625.00 to finish the project. A motion was made (1st Edna, 2nd Yvette) and passed to provide the funds to finish the project.

## July 2015

The Board meeting was cancelled, instead the twelve members went to the Tomales Regional History Museum.



## Dedicated Docents

*Continued from page N-1*

was located on the second floor of the 1934 Firehouse, which is now the home of Hamilton Museum. He later became Wing Executive Officer. Rudy lives in Novato with his wife Barbara.

The Hamilton Field History Museum is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 12-4pm. Stop by and explore the history of Hamilton Army Airfield & Air Force Base and the life of the field after it was decommissioned in 1974.

## The June Membership Meeting at Novato City Hall



*Indian artifacts and books on display from the Museum of the American Indian at the June general membership meeting.*



## Thank you to Oral History Fund Patrons

In November of 2014 the Novato History Museum had 92 interviews (Oral Histories) of Novato residents on cassette tapes that needed to be transferred to CDs. A special Oral History Fund was created. Guild members were very generous and by June of 2015 we had collected \$1,465.00 which enabled us to convert 48 cassettes to CDs. Listed below are the members that contributed to the Oral History Fund.

Lorraine and Chris Avery  
 Sharon and Dan Azevedo  
 Sheila and Paul Brossier  
 Diane Campbell  
 Michael Clancy  
 Alan Dunham  
 Gnoss Family Trust  
 Diana Goebel  
 Mary Jane Guerra  
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 Dee and Ron Vela  
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If you would like to contribute to the NHG Oral History Fund, send a check to NHG at PO Box 1296, Novato, 94948 or go to our web site, [novatohistory.org](http://novatohistory.org) to donate via Pay Pal. There are 44 cassettes to be converted to CDs.

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Novato Historical Guild Membership Report September 2015

#### Individual Memberships:

Marcie Miller  
 Peg Rutti

#### Student Memberships:

#### Family Memberships:

Alyce & Bob Champion  
 Michael Good  
 Arlene Finn  
 Darla & Richard Donovan  
 Madeline Martin & Mark Miller

#### Patron Memberships:

#### Life Memberships:

Carole Bennett  
 Nancy Niche

#### Please support our Guild

#### Business Members:

Acme Digital and Screen Graphics  
 Andrew McAgthon Landscaping  
 Bank of Marin  
 Burrous Bros. Cleaning  
 Marin Landscape Materials  
 Marin Trophies  
 McIsaac Dairy  
 Nave Enterprises  
 Pini Hardware  
 The Wright Salon  
 Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato  
 Zenith Instant Printing

*If you have questions about membership, call Edna Manzoni, Membership Chairman, 415-892-9603.*

*A gift membership always meets the need for that person who has everything.*

## NOVATO'S TREASURES

### Ynita and Burdell House at Olompali



1837

In 1837, Camilo Ynitia built his adobe in part with bricks from the house his father had erected earlier in 1824. Camilo would add onto it in 1840.

In 1846 the *Bear Flag Movement* came to Olompali. It was the bloodiest battle in the whole Bear Flag revolution, with one dead and one wounded.

In 1852, Camilo sold a portion of the land to a Scottish sailor, named James Black. Mr. Black paid \$5000.

In 1863 Black's daughter married Galen Burdell. James Black gave the happy couple the ranch for a wedding present.

In 1865, the Burdells built a two-story house around Camilo Ynita's, using his adobe as their living room.

July 1911- The *Petaluma Argus*, in a story about the new home which James B. Burdell was building on the old Olompali Rancho says: "as a matter of sentiment and to preserve hallowed memories, the present old home, which is partly adobe will be allowed to remain and the wall of the new house will be



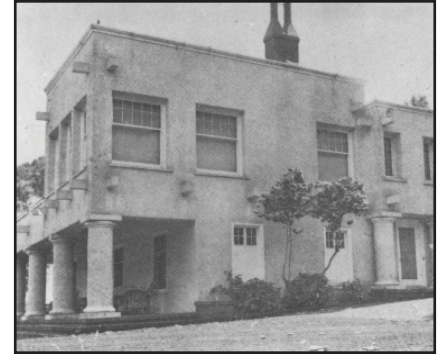
1911

3' thick." Part of the old adobe consisted of the walls of the old building built by Ynitia, said to be the first adobe structure built north of San Francisco.

James and Josephine Sweetser Burdell would move into his parent's home with their only child James Jr. after he had encased the home's with a 26-room mansion.

November 29, 1934 – Headline – "Olompali Ranch at Burdell's chosen for Historical marker #210." The second spot to be marked in Marin County will be the Olompali Ranch home, oldest house north of San Francisco Bay, better known as the Burdell Homestead, the property of the late Mrs. James Black-Burdell, three mile snorth of Novato. The historical Landmarks Committee reports the history of Olompali as follows:

"This house, built in 1776, was the first constructed in California north of San Francisco Bay. An exploring expedition was sent out, headed by Lt. Ayala, then in San Francisco Bay under the orders of the King of Spain, to survey and chart the harbor. This expedition, which was



1934

said to reach Bodega, travelled north, reaching a large Indian Rancheria 3 ½ miles north of Novato. There they halted to rest at what is now the Olompali ranch, owned by the family of the late Dr. James Burdell, and now by the widow of James B. Burdell.

The Indians were hospitable and treated the Spaniards with such kindness that the Spaniards in turn taught them to make adobe bricks and to form them into a house. A one-room house was erected under the Spanish supervision by the father of Camillio Ynitia, the last chief of the Olompali tribe.

This story has been proven wrong: No mention was made of the 1776 exploration of visiting with Indians at Olompali, nor of spending any of their 30 hours along the present Petaluma River instructing the Indians in the making of adobe bricks. Adobe bricks cannot be mixed, formed, dried, nor placed in construction, in 30 hours.

Therefore the present adobe was not constructed in 1776,

*Continued on N-11*

Continued from N-10

## Ynita and Burdell House at Olompali

although one may still claim that the structure at Olompali is the oldest adobe still standing north of San Francisco Bay.

February 20, 1943, Josephine sold the 800-acre Olompali ranch and mansion to Court Harrington of Los Angeles and took up residence in Petaluma. Harrington would sell it to the University of San Francisco in November of 1948 as a retreat for Jesuit priests; and the University in 1964 to a group of Marin and San Francisco investors.



In 1965 a private recreation club with \$5,000 memberships was organized with access to 20 acres, swimming pool and picnic grounds, but this, too, failed. The investment group sold out to Timothy W. O'Donoghue of Novato who in turn leased the property to businessman-turned-hippie-leader Donald C. McCoy, whose "chosen family" included up to 100 members.

When fire gutted the Burdell mansion on February 2, 1969, the cultists moved into a dormitory behind it. On June 24 two small girls fell into the polluted swimming pool and died. Under pressure from the county O'Donoghue moved his tenants out.

In 1977, the State of California, together with Marin County, purchased the property to preserve it as a state historic park.



### Membership Form

Please mail checks to Novato Historical Guild, P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.

Yes, I want to join the Novato Historical Guild and help preserve Novato history!  new  renewal

- |   |        |      |                                   |
|---|--------|------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (full time) membership | \$10   | year | Name _____                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership          | \$20   | year | Address _____                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership              | \$30   | year | City _____                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron membership              | \$100  | year | State _____ Zip _____             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting membership          | \$200  | year | Phone _____                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual    | \$350  | year | Additional donations? _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint         | \$500  | year | Interested in volunteering? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor                     | \$1000 | year |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership            | \$50   | year |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate membership           | \$1000 | year |                                   |



Novato Historical Guild  
P.O. Box 1296  
Novato, CA 94948



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## YOU ARE INVITED

**General Membership Meeting and Barbecue Lunch**  
Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, September 12, 2015 - 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm**  
Hamilton Field History Museum, 555 Hangar Ave.

**Presentation on "Trains in Novato"**  
Mike Pechner: history  
Matt Stevens (SMART): future

**Come for a barbecue of hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans and coleslaw for \$5.00**  
Guild Members and prospective members are welcome

**Novato History Museum**

**815 Delong Avenue**

**(415) 897-4320**

**Hamilton Field History Museum**

**555 Hangar Avenue**

**(415) 382-8614**

**COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!**

The Museums are open three days a week -- Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday - Noon to 4 p.m.

**Closed Major Holidays**