

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

Contents ©2017 Novato Historical Guild, Inc.



July - September 2017

The Novato Historian

Volume 41, Number 3



June General Meeting

The June meeting of the Novato Historical Guild featured guest speaker Marcie Miller (pictured above) of "Save Marin's History." She leads docent-led tours of the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in San Rafael. The twenty-acre hilltop across from Marin Civic Center has the resting sites of the first settlers of Marin County. They include Timothy Murphy, the first naturalized citizen of Mexico and administrator of Mission San Rafael; James Miller, the first settler to come by land to Marin; and John and Maria Lucas, who donated this gift of land as a Catholic Cemetery.



Girl Scout team doing research at the museum.

A Parade, Field Trip & Local Research



Novato Historical Guild entry into the Fourth of July Parade this year was Mike Silva's Cadillac with passenger Bob Manzoni.



Novato Historical Guild Board and General members on a field trip to the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum in July.

The Novato Historian

Published March, June, September and December by the Novato Historical Guild, a California 501(c)3 non-profit corporation formed on November 18, 1976.

Contents © 2017 Novato Historical Guild, Inc.

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.

Novato Historical Guild 2017 Officers

President	Jim Crumpler
Vice President	
Secretary	Kathryn Hansen
Treasurer	Kathryn Hansen

Board of Directors

Sharon Azevedo	Pat Johnstone
Judi Brady	Lonnie Karste
Ray Dwelly	Susan Magnone
George Gness	Edna Manzoni

Honorary Historian

Bill Almeida

History Museum Managers

Hamilton Field	Ray Dwelly
Novato	Susan Magnone

Committee Chairs

Collection Mgmt.	Bill Damon Jim Crumpler Kathryn Hansen
Finance	All Board Members
Fund Raising	Pat Johnstone
Gift Stores	George Gness
Governance	Judi Brady
Hospitality	Sharon Azevedo
Historian	Jim McNern
Oral History	Jim McNern
Membership	Edna Manzoni
Nominating	Susan Magnone
Publicity	Sheila Brossier
Public Outreach	Jim Crumpler
School Tours	Laurie O'Mara
Sunshine	Diane Campbell

Newsletter Editorial Board

Judi Brady	Yvette B. Jackson
Mike Corlett	Jim McNern
Jim Crumpler	Mike Read

Typography, Layout, Composition

Carol Aregger

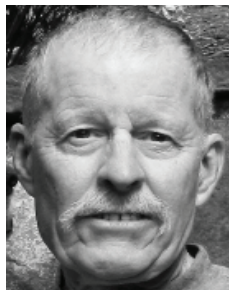
Deadline for the December issue is November 1st.

City of Novato Staff

Recreation Operations Manager

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

Jim Crumpler

President, Novato Historical Guild

Recent Guild Events

Hope everyone that heard Marcie Miller's talk at the June Member's meeting enjoyed it as much as I did. To those of you who missed it, Marcie gave us a tour of the Olivet Cemetery with an emphasis on well-known Novato personalities residing there. The talk was accompanied by a Power Point presentation which made the talk come to life. It was as though we were walking the paths of the cemetery. Marcie has been doing Historic Walks throughout the County for some time. Hopefully we will see more of Marcie in the future, maybe even doing a "History Walk" in Novato!

The speaker for September's Member's Meeting will be Matt Cerkel, Marin Municipal Water District Ranger. Matt will be discussing the sixty or more military plane crashes that occurred in Marin during the time when Hamilton Air Force Base was active.

Thank you, to all the wonderful volunteers that were involved in the Guild's booth at Novato's Art and Wine Festival. We really had great time, not too hot or windy as it sometimes happens.

We saw lots of friends that we hadn't seen in a while. We gave out nearly 100 "Historians" with the hope that the recipients will fill out and send in the Guild Membership form in the back.

Kudos to Mike Silva and crew for again participating in Novato's Fourth of July parade. Mike's wonderfully, restored 1941 Cadillac was a real hit with the crowd, taking "Third Place" in the "Classic Division." Thank you Mike for making sure that the Guild was represented in Novato's Annual celebration.

The Board took a field trip to the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum in lieu of the July meeting. What a wonderful venue, a Carnegie Library built in 1906. The building is still a library, but only for historical research. The Petaluma

Museum Association uses the building for its offices, for some really great displays, exhibitions, and with its excellent acoustics, even concerts.

Ray Dwelly, creator and curator of the Hamilton Field History Museum, recently turned "80 years young." This event was celebrated at the "Keena Estate" by about 25 of Ray's best friends. Lots of wonderful food and sharing of "Ray Stories." Thank you Tom and Diane for doing such a great job of hosting this event.

"Thank You" to ALL the volunteers and docents who do such a terrific job of making our Guild work. To all the members that have been considering volunteering. Try it! You could start with as little as four hours per month. It really is fun, ... if it wasn't I wouldn't be doing it.

Hope to see you all at the September Barbecue,



History Docent Susan Trumbull with third graders trying out the school bell.



Novato-50 Years Ago

(July, August and September 1967)

by Yvette Borloz Jackson

"Novato 50 Years Ago" is a collection of items culled by Yvette Borloz Jackson from the July, August and September issues of the Novato Advance newspaper in the collection of the Novato History Museum and the Novato Advance.

The following is a list of events, held in Novato, celebrating the 4th of July 1967.

- There was a pyrotechnic display set off last night in Bel Marin Keys while more than 10,000 Novatans watched. Almost as spectacular as the fireworks was the traffic jam that developed when the 10,000 spectators tried to leave.

- Cambridge Street held a Fourth of July parade with about 22 neighborhood children participating.

- **ADVANCE IMPROVEMENT CONTEST:** (this was a contest the Advance ran for its readers)

Readers think "westernizing" downtown Novato, instituting parallel parking, and adding flowers and landscaping would improve the downtown section of Novato. The suggestions are to be turned over to the Downtown Study Committee, appointed by the city council last month to offer a plan to revitalize the downtown area. Here are some typical suggestions.

- "Sidewalk art and flower shows. Novato is interested in art. People flock to exhibits, would buy in immediate vicinity. A small museum in one of the empty stores would help." - Mrs. D.S. Moore

- "Run highway out of town. Reunify east and west Novato. Get rid of lousy politicians who oppose this. Make

Grant Ave. the uninterrupted Broadway of Novato." - Dirk J. Smit.

- "Raze oldest and unsightliest stores on Grant Avenue; utilize vacant space (from some of the razed store areas) for large public parking lots (metered for revenue) and build, and restore attractive commercial buildings whose merchants offer only quality merchandise." - Mrs. J. Swenson

- "That we build a town square instead of Gas stations." - Dave Thomas.

- "Tear down all "modern" buildings, rip up the concrete and restore the orchards. Novato is a nice town that is ruining itself with "progress." - Judy Glazer

- Many Novato 4-H youth took top honors at the Sonoma-Marin fair last week-end, which was attended by 57,000 persons. Top awards went to the following:
John Lear - Novato Olompali; Leonard Rodriguez-Novato Jets; Allan Thomas - Novato Valley; Stanley Thomas-Novato Valley, Stanley and Allen Thomas of the Novato Valley took honors again. Victoria Nichols of Novato for amateur oils.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY: Saralee McClelland, former Novato girl won a senior and grand champion award, and her brother George took several top honors. Carol Grossi - Novato Olompali; Shirley Grossi-Novato Olompali; Beryl Grossi-Novato Olompali; Peggy Cummings- Novato Miwok;

SHEEP- Joe Panfiglio- Novato Aggies; John Lear - Novato Olompali.

- Tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m., bargain hunters from all over the North

Marin area will flock to Our Lady of Loretto Parish at Grant and Novato Virginia Avenues for the mid-summer rummage sale, which will go on through Saturday. Everything from linens to furniture and toys will be available. Chairman of the sale is Mrs. Anthony Nunes, other members of the committee are Mrs. Carl Sears and Mrs. Stan Rousseau.

- A group of Sergeants at Hamilton Air Force Base claim that men and computers can live happily together. They say that instead of swiping the bread out of a workman's mouth, computerized equipment will be putting more food on the employee's table with less sweat.

- Ms. Donald Hughes of 55 Half Moon Road, proved her talents as a top county weed grower, when she was awarded the grand sweepstakes award for her weed arrangement at the Marin Art and Garden Fair held over the fourth.

- Max Keys said this week that the sale of his Rancho Rafael motel- restaurant in Ignacio is still in the process of being completed. *The Advance* reported last week that the facility is being purchased by Steve Allen Junior, the son of well known television comedian Steve Allen. Columnist Herb Caen reported Monday in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Allen is one of three principles involved in the purchase, the others being Mel Swig and Ray Cosgrove. Swig is the son of hotelman Ben Swig and Cosgrove is a real estate man presently living in Rancho Rafael. Caen quoted the sale price at approximately \$1 million and Keys confirmed the figure.

Continued on Page N-4

50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N-3

- Captain Henry A. Sandbach of Novato is presently training with a 91st division, California's largest army reserve component, at Camp Roberts near Paso Robles. Captain Sandbach is the divisions public information officer and editor of the *FIR TREE* the 91st division' tabloid newspaper, five issues of which are being published during the two-week summer encampment. In civilian life Captain Sandbach is with the public relations department of Del Monte Corporation. He is a writer-photographer on the DEL MONTE SHIELD. He is a member of the San Francisco Press Club and the Reserve Officers Association.

- Now under construction downtown Novato center is the new TG&Y stores company outlet set to open in late October.

- "Over Hill over dale we have hit the Dipsea trail". Six Novato runners will be running in Sundays Dipsea Race. The Dipsea is sponsored by the Mill Valley Junior Chamber of Commerce and is expected to attract at least 400 runners. Novatoans racing in the Dipsea with Marin Athletic club are, Darren Walton, Ray Davis, Don Makela, Scot Bulfinch, Ron Elijah and John Noonan.

- Those who appeared at the dedication of the city's Arroyo Avichi Park, located alongside Rancho Elementary School on So. Novato Blvd. are Mayor Wayne Womack, County Supervisor William Gness, city parks & recreation Commissioners Faris Morse and Lou Johnson, City Manager John Baget, City Councilman Harley McAskill, Jaycee President Roger Hillman and Attorney Ed Grundstrom of the Novato Civic Foundation.

- Young Bros. had a Mattress Sale offering the "New Super Size Beautyrest Supreme by Simmons" Beautyrest Supreme Long Boy- \$199 set, Beautyrest Supreme Queen Size-\$239.50 set, Beautyrest Supreme King Size-\$339.50 set

- Carl J. Jensen, Novato's young and noted cross-country runner and now a Private 1/c in the U.S. Army, has been wounded in recent days in South Vietnam action, according to his family here. It is understood that he was wounded when he walked into a booby trap grenade in the demilitarized zone in Viet Nam. It is known that his injury includes his right hand. Jensen who was raised in Novato, attended grade school and high school here and went to study at College of Marin and Sonoma State College. He was well known here for his participation in cross-country running events and was the winner of last years Dipsea race.

- From Jim's Sport Shop, there have been some good reports on deer hunting, so far. The deer clubs here in the county are taking as many bucks as they normally do. Quite a few of the local hunters have tagged bucks too. Dove season will open Friday September 1. Bag limit is 12, with 24 allowed in possession, after the first day. Shooting time is from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset. Sunrise will be 5:39, sunset at 6:43 o'clock. Prospects appear good right now. Unless we have a cold spell of cold weather to send them further south, there will be more doves around than usual.

- (Novato Advance September 6, 1967) Included in today's newspaper is the first annual tabloid section devoted exclusively to Novato's women's clubs and organizations. It is intended as a salute to the women of Novato and to the many community activities they organize themselves into groups to undertake. The variety of causes the women of Novato address themselves to and the efforts they expend are limitless. Without dedication of these women, Novato would be a less attractive place in which to live.

- Two Novato women have been selected to appear in the 1967 edition of "Outstanding Civic Leaders of America". They are Mrs. Grant Morse and Mrs. Clark Palmer. The nation-

wide directory list some 6000 men and women nominated by city officials, Chambers of Commerce and civic groups as outstanding civic leaders who made significant contributions to their communities.

The following are a list of some of the weddings listed in the *Novato Advance* from July thru September 1967. There were so many listed that I could not fit in more than the names and wedding dates. Here are some of them:

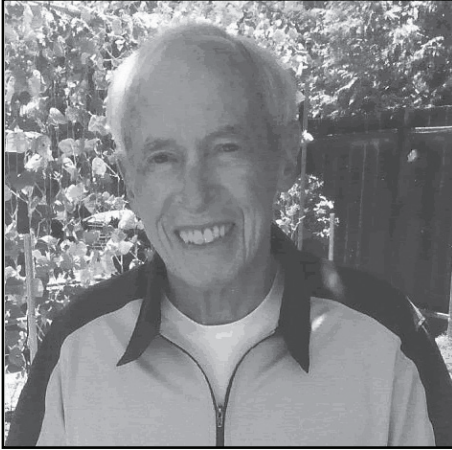
- Barbara Lee Diane Cotterell to Norman Russell; 6/24/1967
- Sherry E. Osborn to Robert Elwin Willey; 6/24/1967
- Karen M. Larson to Donald Thomas Scribner; 7/1967
- Marcia Ellen McNally to Donald Irwin Jerome; 7/1967
- Judith Payne to Edward Michael Torrico; 8/12/1967
- Barbara Susanna Bruff to Edward Hemmingson; 8/5/2967
- Renee Jean Allen to Dennis Donald Peters; 8/12/1967
- Ninette Frances Lardon to Carl Gordon; 8/1967
- Claudette Jenkins to Emmet Jack Fry Jr.; 8/12/1967
- Sandra Dale Michael to Dennis Powell Murr; 8/12/1967
- Wendy Anne Hardcastle to Harry Fry Avis; 8/26/1967
- Shoshana Waisman to Richard N Hamernick; 8/20/1967
- Marshia Carolyn Wolfe to Lt. Gordon Lawrence Mulch; 8/1967
- Sue Maureen McGinnis to Thomas Charles Tomassini; 9/1967
- Diana Joan Winters to Terrence Palmer Witzel; 9/1967
- JoAnn Howard to S/Sgt Alonzo E. Jordan Jr.; 9/1967
- Cynthia Lou Stanley to Kenneth Gobbin; 9/1967
- Peggy Bartlett to Michael Lindsay; 9/1967
- Irene Lee Kiebert to James Kent Willwerth; 9/1967

Happy Reading and I will see you in December.

Yvette Borloz Jackson

Novato Memories

Jim McNern



Don Edwards

Don Edwards is the oldest son of the late Alten and Ida Edwards. He is a 1956 graduate of San Rafael High School where he was a standout athlete. Don attended U.C. Davis and then got his California teaching credential through San Francisco State University. He was a teacher and reading specialist in the Novato Unified School District for many years until his retirement. Don shares his Novato memories in this September issue of the Novato Historian.

HERITAGE

Dad was born in 1916 in Louisiana, Missouri to a successful farming family of Welsh heritage. He was the youngest of three boys and, although he was a high school state champion in judging dairy cows, he did not take to farming. After high school he joined President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). He soon found himself near Sebastopol, California doing trail and park work in the early 1930's.

Mom was born in Arcata, California in 1918 to Czechoslovakian parents who immigrated to the United States in the early 1900's. She was the youngest of four children. Both her parents worked in a barrel factory at one time. Mom later met Dad in Santa Rosa while attending beauty college.

Dad, with his depression era work ethic, learned to type and took over extra duties at camp. One of those was purchasing things from a grocery store in Santa Rosa for the commissary. The owner took a liking to Dad and promised him a job after his CCC duty. Dad later took him up on the offer, and this man became Dad's mentor and friend.

This gentleman encouraged Dad to become an owner of his own store and, after managing several Safeway stores in Marin County, Dad returned in 1940 and, on a handshake, borrowed \$5,000 to buy his own store, Marin Food Center in San Rafael. Dad paid him back in six months. Oh, the forgotten power of

an agreement made by firm handshake.

This kind man and Dad would, in my mind, represent what Tom Brokaw would later call "the greatest generation."

RANCH

We moved to Novato on June 28, 1949. Our home was located at 1854 Indian Valley Road. We had acres of land, a big barn and several large chicken houses.

In recent years, I found out that my home was the residence of the Zeh family who immigrated from Germany in 1906 and who actually built my home and had a huge poultry farm.

Their only son, Fred Jr., was a friend of Will Lieb. While in the service of the army building a landing strip on Wake Island, Fred Jr. was captured by the Japanese in 1941. Three years later he died in a prison camp of pneumonia. Will is responsible for a monument to his friend in the Zeh family plot in Pioneer Cemetery.

Moving from San Rafael to Novato was like moving from "Playville" to "Choreville." One of my chores, besides building and painting fences, or mixing concrete to cement the barn dirt floor, was candling and packaging the eggs we got from our 500 white leghorn chickens. Dad sold the eggs in his store.

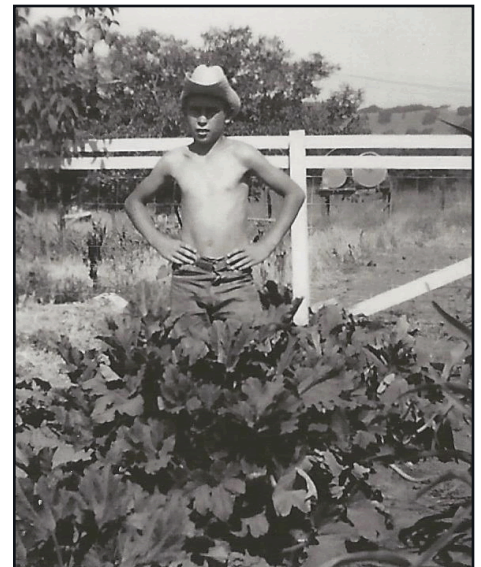
Another task was caring for "Princess Peggy" my grade Guernsey 4-H dairy project from calf to cow. I can still picture her turning her head in the stanchion with her big doe-like eyes questioning my slow milking. Unfortunately, there was no foam in my milk pails. When Dad milked it sounded like one constant stream of milk with foam overflowing his pail.

Thinking of Peggy reminds me of the fun I had showing her at the Petaluma Fair. Someone once commented about her tail, which when I washed and brushed her, would always fluff out like a feather duster.

My first and last 4-H presentation also comes to mind ... "How to Care for Live-stock Hoofs," at Druid's Hall. Thank goodness for Jim McNern. He did the talking. I did the demonstrating. Need I tell you, I was a little shy in my youth.

My favorite place on the ranch was the barn hayloft. It was a great place to hide, read and of course fly paper airplanes out the loft door opening.

One thing I used to look forward to, which you absolutely couldn't do today, was to shoot trap behind the second chicken



Don working in vegetable garden.

Continued on Page N-6

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-5

house against the hillside in preparation for duck and pheasant season. Collecting missed or unbroken clay pigeons was almost as much fun as trying to hit them.

Next door neighbors were the Bettencourts, who had an old Gravenstein apple orchard (deer loved the wind falls) and the Heinzes (later the Goldsmiths). Walt Goldsmith was known for the beautiful saddles he made.

Across the road in front of us were the Sands and Bloom families. My interest in Ford tractors comes from watching Mr. Bloom on his tractor cultivating his kale crop.

Heading down Indian Valley Road towards McClay Road were the Steele, Peterson (turkey farm), Toomey, Rathaus, Roach and Berkov families. Milt Roach was very instrumental in getting Dad into hunting and showing German Shorthaired dogs.

Moving up the road towards town were the Witzel, Knutte, Kirk, Rivasplata, Marzell and Pronzini families. Mr. And Mrs. Marzell were probably two of the nicest people I ever met. I looked forward to seeing Sam's spring vegetable garden. It was a special treat to see him working his monster rototiller.

NOVATO

What was it like growing up in Novato? One word. Great! My younger brother, Gary and much younger sister, Jo Ann would agree. We were very fortunate when our parents moved to Novato. Living and discovering ourselves in a rural setting had special meaning to each of us.

Some of the things I remember about downtown Novato include the Pini Feed Mill where we got our straw, alfalfa, salt licks and chicken mash. I really enjoyed the smell of this place ... go figure. Mom used to make pillow cases out of the used Albers mash sacks.

Pini Hardware on Grant Avenue was another popular store, as Dad had a lot of renovation projects going on at the ranch. The unbelievable customer service of this "iconic" hardware store continues to this day. Our Lady of Loretto Church on Grant Avenue and 2nd Street was our Sunday destination with Mom. She would often comment about Eleonora Lafranchi's flower arrangement on the altar. Sometimes she had to separate Gary and me when we got the giggles. After church we

usually went across the street to Dean's Rexall Drug Store for a treat. My brother would later marry in this church in 1960. Today the building is occupied by a restaurant.

The Patterson Ranch at the corner of Grant Avenue and 7th Street was a sight to behold. The beautiful grassy field that fronted their home, which was near Novato Creek, was mesmerizing on a windy day. Across the street on the Marion School side, I remember participating in a 4-H project that involved planting cork oak trees. Some of those trees are still present today.

Other downtown memories include the Marin County Library branch in the old, but beautiful, Torassa building; the third (1917) Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot; Ben Franklin 5 and 10; Novato Theater, under the capable and firm guidance of Mr. Donohue; the fascinating and friendly Zunino Shoe Shop; and the Hi Fi Drive-In, a social magnet for teenagers.

One of Mom's favorite stops was Womack's Fabric store. Wayne Womack was the first mayor of incorporated Novato (1960 - 1962).

My first working job started in Novato with classmate John Matz. We were hired to prune a small vineyard off Center Road. That endeavor allowed me to buy a pair of track shoes for running track at San Rafael High School.

Dad, in the early fifties sold his stores with his partner and eventually ended up at Brice Brother's Market in the new Nave Shopping Center. This was a very fortuitous event, as it impacted my brother and me during our high school and college years. Eddie Brice would later hire us as part time employees. This steadfast, giving man helped finance our college education.

Besides the wonderful family of people I met while working at the market, one thing stands out from that experience.-- Dad catching Gary and me in a rare non-productive moment and saying, "Shake a leg boys!" It still makes us laugh.

EDUCATION

I was born in 1938 in Santa Rosa, California. My early elementary years were spent in San Rafael where I attended Short School from kindergarten to fifth grade. Classmates there included Donnie Brady, Larry Weber, Pete Stragnola, Bonnie Clark, Sandra Walton and Joyce Soldavini.



Don and his Guernsey heifer, Princess Peggy..

I would later reconnect with most of these students in high school.

When my family moved to Novato, I entered sixth grade in the fall of 1949. I was so impressed with the new Marion Street School. Each classroom had its own fenced garden area outside. Inside the open, well lit classrooms were chairs and desks that weren't screwed or bolted to the floor. Linoleum floor tiles over concrete replaced oil stained wooden floors. No more troublesome desk ink wells or musty cloakrooms. This was a school that was "Wow!" worthy.

Mrs. Estes was my sixth grade teacher, and she was so kind and thoughtful. An example of the latter was when she sent Carl Rathaus and me a post card the summer before we entered eighth grade. She was vacationing in Canada and remembered our "careful research" on agriculture in the provinces. Cross my heart, I still have her card. I later had her husband for a teacher when I took chemistry at San Rafael High School.

Mr. Lavaroni was my seventh grade teacher. He was fun and always got a laugh out of me. He was also a very talented musician.

Continued on Page N-7

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-6

Mr. Slepnikoff was my eighth grade teacher. He was very serious and firm, but he was the only teacher I ever had who would sometimes loosen his tie and join us in a football game. By the way, he was very quick on his feet. One time he took us to San Rafael to play another eighth grade class in flag football. Winning was exciting, but more exciting was discovering that his car had electric windows ... a first for all of us. But the one thing I remember and cherish the most about Mr. Slepnikoff is that he took the time to visit my parents one evening to encourage them to send me to college.

I also had Miss Lu Sutton for eighth grade English, and although I never got the hang of diagraming sentences, I respected her as both a teacher and a principal. Yes, she could freeze water with her stem look, but she also had a very warm smile. And yes, I avoided her if I saw her on the playground with her ruler.

Some of my classmates that made this formative journey through the middle-school years were: Carl Rathaus, Walt Nolan, John Kingsley, Glen Wilfert, Vern Dwelly, John Matz, Bill Hubbard, Bronce Chapin, Frank Merrill, Eddie Baldwin, Willis Bruns, Julie Berkov, Valerie Schwindt, Marlene Guibbini, Sandra Glass, Judy Johnson, Joan Riddell, Becky Hamilton, Sharon Smith, Erlene Porter, Delaine Zanco, Carol Thum and Rosalie Skinner.

My elementary years in Novato were good ones. I found my teachers kind, knowledgeable and engaging. I liked them and respected them. More important, I like to think they helped define me as a future teacher in Novato.

In 1952 I enrolled in San Rafael High School. Novato didn't have a high school then ... not until 1954/55.

Known as the "Novato Hicks" we definitely felt like outsiders. Being a boy, I worried about the rumor that we would be "pantsexed" the first day of school with our pants pulled up the flag pole!

My freshman year was a big adjustment for me ... many, many students, hallways, noise, bells, lockers, trying to find classrooms and getting there on time. Thanks to Mrs. Turner, my counselor, and Mom, classes got sorted out, routine became the norm, and I started to relax and got involved with class and student body government, clubs and sports.



The Edwards' family home and barn on Indian Valley Road.

My sophomore, junior and senior years were very special. In fact, high school is my favorite rung on the education ladder, and I look forward to our reunions

In my sophomore year William J. J. Smith, Superintendent of Novato Schools (1947 - 1962), contacted both Erlene Porter and me to see if we wouldn't mind sharing our opinions on why Novato should pass a bond measure for their own high school. We both accepted and spoke separately several or more times over a two week period at the Novato theater during intermissions.

My big concern was that it was very difficult to participate in after school activities and sports. Although Novato provided bus service to and from San Rafael High School, that did not include after school programs.

So, after football or track practice, I would walk to the 101, hitchhike to Novato, call Mom or walk home (2-3 miles) and then do my chores: milk Peggy or old Bossy, our Jersey cow, strain the milk, gather eggs if Mom hadn't, and then do my homework.

And you know... Novato got its high school and now has two.

Before going off to college, I had to sell Princess Peggy and her calf. Walking my old friend over to her new owner was a difficult and tearful experience.

After graduating from U.C. Davis with a major in art and completing my military service at Fort Ord, I went back to school.,

first to San Francisco State for my teaching credential and then to Sonoma State for advanced degree work in education.

Before closing I'd like to share one of my "What am I getting myself into?" moments. Coming back from a highly structured and disciplined military environment to the freedoms of civilian life took a little adjusting. As I was working for an elementary school teaching credential, one of my first classes was a primary physical education class, and the instructor asked us to roll on the floor and pretend we were logs. What? Geez! I was a former company commander who was airborne and E.I.B. qualified, and I could only imagine what my First Sergeant would think, as embarrassment washed over me.

Well, after swallowing my pride with a strong dose of humility, I got myself into a most rewarding career.

Being able to come back to Novato and to raise my family, work and retire here has been very special. Novato is Novato because of its people ...exceptional people. I feel privileged to have been touched by the families and children I have met and served.

The WASP

By Michael Corlette

In early 1944 a small group of women pilots arrived at Hamilton Field. They were members of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP. Nationwide, there were 1,074 WASP scattered around the US at various military bases. The WASP were not military pilots, they were Civil Service personnel. Shirley (Ingalls) Thackara, a WASP pilot stationed at Hamilton, said in a 1994 interview, "We would walk around the base in our uniforms and people did not know who we were or what we were doing." All WASP contributions to War effort went largely unrecognized or remembered because, after the war, all their activities were classified.

The main purpose of the WASP was to free up male pilots for combat. The WASP was created in August of 1943 by the merger of two separate divisions in the Army Air Transport Command. The WAFS, which was the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron whose duty was to "ferry" new aircraft from the manufacturer, to various US military bases around the US. The second group was the WFTD, Women's Flying Training Detachment. The WFTD mission was to recruit and train highly qualified civilian women pilots to fly military aircraft in non-combat flying roles. In addition to ferrying, the WASP towed targets for live anti-aircraft practice, served as instrument and flight instructors, did engineering test piloting and radio control work, performed weather duties and did cargo and personnel transport.

The birth of the WASP program was not an easy one. In the early 1940's, there was a general bias against women flying military aircraft. Not only among military men, but also in Congress. Many doubted whether women had the physical stamina to handle a large aircraft in rough weather. Once the women pilots completed training, at some bases, they were not welcomed with open arms. In two cases, there was evidence of deliberate aircraft sabotage which killed two WASP. But, for public relations purposes, it was kept quiet.

After appropriate training and over a short amount of time, it was shown that women could handle flight duties as well as men, and in some instances, better. In 1940's the P-39 was the hot new pursuit plane, however men ferrying the airplane from factory to a military base were experiencing a higher than expected

accident rate. The men called the plane a "Flying Coffin." Lt. Gen. W. H. Tunner, an early advocate of utilizing female pilots, suspected the men were not flying the plane per the flight manual. He assigned a group of female pilots to be checked-out on, and deliver P-39's. The women had no P-39 delivery problems. Later, asked to explain what the difference was, Turner responded that, "women pilots paid attention in class, and they read the characteristics and specifications of the plane they were to fly, before they flew it." Later on, Tunner noted that "I had no more complaints from the men."

In September of 1944 Lieutenant Col. Paul Tibbets, generally regarded as one of the best bomber pilots in the Army Air Corp, was selected for a secret project. The project required he put together and train selected top notch flight crews to fly the B-29 Superfortress in preparation for a special mission. The mission, which was kept secret from the flight crews, was to deliver the atomic bomb.

But Tibbets had a big problem, none of his crack pilots wanted to fly the B-29. Because of the urgent need for a long-range bomber in the Pacific, unlike the workhorse B-17, the B-29 was rushed through design, production and testing. Boeings Chief Test Pilot Edmund T. Allen and his crew of eleven had been killed testing the aircraft in February 1943. In addition, the planes experienced numerous engine fires. Tibbets was desperate to

change his pilot's fear of the aircraft. He took a chance. He thought that if he had two women pilots deliver a B-29 to the transition base in Clovis, NM, it would help change his pilot's opinion of the aircraft.

WASP Dora Dougherty and Dorothea Moorman were both accomplished pilots, but had no experience with a 4 engine aircraft or anything near the size of a B-29. Tibbets worked with them for three days instructing them on how to properly fly the "widow maker" as his men called it. Dougherty and Moorman delivered the plane and spent the next few days training European theater, battle-seasoned B-17 bomber flight crews, on how to properly fly the B-29. The gamble worked. There were no more complaints from the men about having to fly the B-29.

Fifty-one years later in 1995, Dougherty, then Dora Dougherty Strother, Ph.D., received a letter from Harry McKeown, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret), a pilot she trained in Clovis. The letter in part read, "You were the pilot that day and demonstrated your excellent flying skills and convinced us the B-29 was the plane that any pilot could be proud to fly. From that day on we never had a pilot that didn't want to fly the B-29."

As the war wound down and more male pilots were returning from combat, the need for the WASP lessened so the program was deactivated on December 20th, 1944.

Continued on Page N-9



Lieutenant Col. Paul Tibbets with WASP members Dorothea Mooreman, Dora Dougherty Strother, and other crewman

The WASP

Continued from Page N-8



President Obama and the Congress awarded the WASP the Congressional Gold Medal on July 9, 2009.

The WASP during their tenure wanted to be "militarized" so their contributions to the war effort would be recognized and they could receive military benefits. (A WASP killed in the line of duty received no benefits, and their families had to pay to have the body shipped home).

But, it never happened, and as time went on the issue died. But in 1976 that all changed.

The Pentagon released a statement that the Air Force was going to train women to fly and that they would be the "first women to fly for the military." This pronouncement caused quite a "stir" among the women who were in the WASP. After all, the WASP in their 23-month existence, had logged 60 million miles, delivered 12, 650 military aircraft of 78 different types and 38 had given their lives for the cause. During their tenure, there was not one type of US military aircraft that a WASP didn't fly. Well, all Hell broke loose. The women went to work. They wanted to be recognized for their contributions to the war effort and as veterans of WWII.

They enlisted the help of Col. Bruce Arnold, son of Hap Arnold, and Senator Barry Goldwater, himself a former Ferry Command Pilot, to take up the cause in Congress. It was a very difficult "sell." Speeches to congress were made by former WASP, petitions were submitted, and Goldwater continued to push legislation for WASP recognition, even after initial defeats.

Finally, on November 23rd, 1977, President Carter signed the G.I. Bill Improvement Act giving WASP honorable

discharges and veteran status with limited benefits. Coincidentally, the first class of female pilots trained by United States Air Force, graduated that year.

In 1984 each WASP received a World War II Victory Medal. Those with more than one years' service were also awarded American Theater Ribbon/American Campaign Medal for their service during WWII.

On July 9th, 2009 President Obama and the Congress awarded the WASP the Congressional Gold Medal. On May 10th of 2010, 300 hundred surviving WASP came to the Capitol to accept their medals.

Recognition for the efforts of the WASP came very slowly, but it did happen.

This brief synopsis of the WASP cannot do justice to the entire story of the women pilots, who wanted to contribute their talents to the war effort, and the difficulties they encountered. For a comprehensive view of the WASP history, the PBS series, American Experience, featured the WASP in a 1999 show, which was titled "Fly Girls." To view the program, Go to You Tube and enter, Fly Girls - Madge Minton.

Main reference sources:

WASPs, by Vera S. Williams, published 2011

Fly Girls, PBS, American Experience, 1999

Women of the WASP, Dora Dougherty Strother

<http://www.B-29.org/fly-girls/fly-girls5>

Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Kathryn Hansen

April 2017

City Report - Susan Magnone reported that April 24th is the start date for the new liaison, Elizabeth Tran, between City of Novato and the Novato Historical Guild. The person is from El Segundo which is a smaller community that Novato. Kevin Conklin is the interim Director of Parks and Recreation.

Unfinished Business:

Past Perfect 5.0 update - many people signed up on www.Volunteermatch.org. A high school student is now entering unrecorded artifacts into Past Perfect software program.

New Business:

Centennial - Libba Patterson is turning 100 years old and there will be a celebration at the Margaret Todd center Saturday April 29th from 1-4PM.

Action Item: Susan to e-mail members and Edna to ask Pat Eklund if the City can give Libba a proclamation.

Memorial Service - Anna Morrison, long time member and Thursday docent, has passed away. The Guild offered to provide refreshments after the church service. The members agreed to name the docent alcove "Anna's Alcove" in honor of Anna.

Strategic Plan - Lonnie, Susan & Kathryn met to discuss the budget process. It was decided that the Guild should have a plan to go with goals, objectives and priorities. The Board agreed. **Action Item:** Lonnie will form a committee to start the process.

Committee Reports & Updates

Hamilton Museum - Rudy Picarelli, a longtime member and Thursday Docent has passed away. A student volunteer accompanied by a parent works on Saturdays.

Downtown Museum - The City has asked Susan Magnone to be on the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Planning Committee. Van White

Continued on Page N-10

Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

Continued from Page N-9

(Hamilton docent) is putting on a fund raiser for the Downtown Museum. The fund raiser is a documentary on Bali April 25th.

May 2017

A volunteer is scanning in photographs and adding descriptions. There are 500 pictures and 50 have been completed (4 hours). Another volunteer researching the "deeds of gifts" for the maps.

New Business:

Strategic Plan – The committee (Jim, Pat Johnstone/member and Kathryn) met earlier today. The plan is to review the mission statement and compare it to other historical societies in the county. The goal is to present a draft in August and get Board approval in October.

Simmons House update – Jim met with City Manager, Regan Candellario to discuss the Simmons House. Regan has to find out what the plans are for Sherman St. before he can answer a request for the Simmons house.

Novato Art & Wine – June 10 & 11th. Volunteers needed to man the booth.

4th of July Parade – There was a discussion on what the Guild should enter this year.

Committee Reports & Updates

Hamilton Museum – The program on the interactive plane is ten years old and needs to be updated. There was a discussion on youth volunteers at the museums come under the guidelines of the City of Novato's Youth Programs? *Action Item:* Liz Tran will follow-up on the question.

Downtown Museum – Donations of \$370 from Linda Land's *Travel Log of Bali* are restricted for a new DVD player.

Susan Magnone spoke at the North Marin Breakfast Club.

3rd Grade Tours are in full swing.

Membership – Current paid memberships are 284, overdue 60, life mem-

bers 85 and deceased members 3

Outreach – A video has been filmed of the American Indian Museum.

June 2017

City Report – Liz Tran - Discussed City capital projects ahead of the Simmons House, required testing for volunteer, minors required to be accompanied by parents, key code locks and Wi-Fi status.

Unfinished Business:

Susan reported on the status of Past Perfect 5 update.

New Business:

Strategic Plan – Jim Crumpler reminded the board that the goal is for the committee to present a draft in August and get Board approval in October.

September Member's meeting – Jim and Ray reported that the speaker at the September Members meeting would be Matt Cerkel, speaking on local plane crashes.

Field Trip – The July 11 field trip will be a visit to the Petaluma historical museum.

4th of July Parade – There was a discussion on what float the Guild should enter this year.

Committee Reports & Updates

Museum Stores – Pat Johnstone reported on the income from donations, the gift shops sales and museum royalties.

Hamilton Museum – Ray Dwelly reported on the September meeting speaker as noted above.

Downtown Museum – Susan Magnone spoke on 3rd Grade Tours.

Membership – Edna Manzoni reported that current paid memberships are 298, overdue 53, life members 85.

Welcome New Guild Members

Novato Historical Guild Membership Report September 2017

Individual Membership
Joanne Briggs

Business Memberships:

Please support our Guild Business Members:

Acme Digital and Screen Graphics
Andrew McAgdon Landscaping
Bank of Marin
Goltermann Garden & Country
Inn, Petaluma, CA
Indian Valley Golf Club
Marin Landscape Materials
Marin Trophies
Marin Volvo/Saab
Mclsaac Dairy
Nave Enterprises
Novato Builders Supply, Inc.
Pini Hardware
The Wright Salon
Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato
Valley Oak Wealth Management
Zenith Instant Printing

If you have questions about membership, call

*Edna Manzoni,
Membership Chairman,
415-892-9603.*



2017 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the month
Margaret Todd Senior Center
 1560 Hill Road
 Time: 1:30- 3:30 PM

Jan 10	July (no meeting)
Feb. 14	Aug 8
March 14	Sept 12
April 11	Oct 10
May 9	Nov 14
June 13	Dec 12

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Susan Magnone at NHG1850@yahoo.com or 415 897-5705, in case a meeting has been changed.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

Connie Ferrarese
Elizabeth "Liz" Gnos
Karen Milliken
Dietrich Stroeh
Sam Thomas

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.

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

Dick Altman and family on the loss of his son, Bruce

Pete Ferrarese and family on the loss of Connie Ferrarese

The Gnos family on the loss of Elizabeth Gnos

Gladys Pimentel on the loss of her sister Elizabeth Gnos

The Milliken family on the loss of Karen Milliken

Louise Gnos Neustadt on the death of her husband, Michael Neustadt

The Stroeh family on the loss of Dietrich Stroeh

Mary Kay Stratigos and family on the loss of her father Paul Eliopoulos

The Thomas family on the loss of Sam Thomas

Contact Us

Hamilton Field History Museum

Manager: Ray Dwelly
 Museum phone: 415-382-8614
 Email: Hamilton_museum@att.net
<https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/>

Novato History Museum

Manager: Susan Magnone
 Museum phone: 415-897-4320
 Email: NHG1850@yahoo.com
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

DOCENTS NEEDED HAMILTON FIELD HISTORY MUSEUM

Contact: Ray Dwelly
 (415) 382-8614

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	Email address: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Business membership	\$50	year	
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate membership	\$1000	year	



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



NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NOVATO, CA
PERMIT NO. 138

Change Service Requested

TIME VALUE



YOU ARE INVITED

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

Saturday, September 9, 12:00 noon

Hamilton Field History Museum, 555 Hangar Avenue, Novato

There will be a presentation by Matt Cerkel, Marin Municipal Water District Ranger.
Matt will be discussing the sixty or so military plane crashes that occurred
during the operation of Hamilton Field Air Force Base.

A barbecue lunch will be served of hamburgers, hotdogs, baked beans and coleslaw for \$5. Guild Members
and anyone interested in Novato are welcome.

Novato History Museum

Hamilton Field History Museum

815 Delong Avenue

555 Hangar Avenue

(415) 897-4320

(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