



Annual Holiday Party Held at Margaret Todd Center

The Guild's annual holiday party was held Saturday, December 8 at the Margaret Todd Center. The 2008 budget and new slate of officers were approved. The Novato Music Association entertained the group with a wide selection of Christmas

and holiday music. Diana Goebel and Edna Manzoni and their hospitality committee provided a wide variety of delicious holiday refreshments.

The Guild collected seven boxes of canned food for the Novato Human Needs Center.

Third Grade School Tours Program

by Cynthia Motsinger

Did you know that Novato's first postmaster Henry Jones drowned in a horse trough? This is a history mystery because we don't know how he ended up there. This fact is one of many that get the attention and interest of third graders when they visit the Novato History Museum. Third grade teachers are contacted by our school tours coordinators to schedule their visits.

Approximately four hundred third graders come to the museum each year.

The docent led tours of the museum and Old Town take place each Spring from March until June. The tour includes two parts: a guided tour of the inside of the museum and a walking tour of Old Town. While the children are in the museum, the docents explain the history of Novato

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Novato Music Association Chorus singing at December General meeting.

Coming Events!

Saturday, March 1, 2 p.m.
General Meeting
Margaret Todd Senior Center
Speaker: Fred Codoni, "Railroads"

Monday, March 10, 1 p.m.
Board Meeting
Police Department Training Room

Monday, April 14, 1 p.m.
Board Meeting
Police Department Training Room

Monday, May 12, 1 p.m.
Board Meeting
Police Department Training Room

Saturday, May 31, Noon
*General Meeting &
1958 8th Grade Reunion
Old Timers' Day*
Druids Hall on Grant Avenue

Reminder! March General Meeting

The March general meeting is Saturday, March 1 at 2 p.m. at the Margaret Todd Senior Center, 1560 Hill Road. The guest speaker will be author and historian, Fred Codoni, who will talk about the Northwestern Pacific Railroad and its impact on Marin County.

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.

Novato Historical Guild 2008 Officers

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| President | Jim McNern |
| Vice President | Anna Young |
| Secretary | Diane Campbell |
| Treasurer | Charlotte Urban |
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| Cindy Motsinger | Pat Johnstone |
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| Mike Silva | Cathrin van den Toorn |
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Eleonora Lafranchi

Committee Chairs

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Cemetery | Joe Giari |
| Finance | Anna Young |
| Fund Raising | Anna Young |
| Gift Store | Pat Johnstone |
| Grants | Edna Manzoni |
| Hamilton Museum | Mike Silva |
| Hospitality | Diana Goebel |
| | Edna Manzoni |
| Mailing | Bill Almeida |
| Membership | Edna Manzoni |
| Nominating | Ron Vela |
| Oral History | Nikki Gothelf |
| Publicity | Pending appointment |
| Public Outreach | Cathrin van den Toorn |
| School Tours | Janice Bazurto |
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| Volunteer Scheduler | Ida Kohl |

Newsletter Editorial Board

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| Bill Almeida | Jim McNern |
| Pat Johnstone | Pat Willat |

Typography, Composition, Layout

Mike Clancy

City of Novato Staff

Community Services Division Manager
Kathy Graves

Museum Curator

Samantha Kimpel

Original articles and photographs related to Novato history are welcomed!

Deadline for June issue is April 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, 75 Rowland Way, Suite 200, Novato, CA 94945.



President's Corner

by Jim McNern
President, Novato Historical Guild

Happy New Year to all! Spring is just around the corner which means we will be gearing up for the start of the third grade tours at the museum. Our third grade school tours team of Cindy Motsinger, Anne Lehan and Janice Bazurto will soon be setting up the schedules and contacting the schools to arrange the tours.

We welcome three new members to our Board of Directors: DIANE CAMPELL, a resident of Hamilton, lives six houses away from the future Hamilton Museum, and has been an active Saturday docent at the museum and will become the Guild's new secretary. CINDY MOTSINGER, retired Novato elementary teacher comes on board with lots of experience as a Wednesday docent, co-chair of the school tours committee and chairman and designer of our 4th of July float committee. STEPHEN SCHWINDT grew up in Novato, attended Novato schools, was active in 4-H club work, and has a keen interest in preserving Novato's history.

Our spring general meeting is one week earlier this year, so you are receiving this March edition of the Novato Historian a week earlier than usual. The Guild's general meeting will be held at the Margaret Todd Senior Center on Saturday, March 1 starting at 2 o'clock. Our guest speaker will be railroad historian and editor Fred Codoni from Fairfax. Fred is the editor of "The Northwestern" railroad magazine that is published twice a year and a newsletter called "The Headlight" published six times a year. Fred will be talking about the Northwestern Pacific Railroad and the impact it had on Novato and Marin County.

We are planning on having "Old Timers' Day" on May 31 in the Druids Hall. This event is also going to be a week earlier than usual because of scheduling problems and a conflict with Novato's Art and Wine Festival in Old Town the following weekend. We will be honoring the 1958 8th grade graduating class from Marion School. Lovetta Craig, a member of this class, has taken on the responsibility of contacting her classmates.

Congratulations to long time Guild members Reno and Babe Pronzini on their 90th birthdays and for celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary.

Third Grade Program

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in chronological order, using old photos, exhibit, and hands-on equipment. They are taken on a walking tour of historic Old Town Novato while referring to a set of photos each student has been given. The morning tour enhances the required third grade course of study of their city of Novato.

This program would not be possible without the dedication of our vol-

unteers and we thank them.

We invite you to join our group of docents. We provide training that includes a docent manual, mentoring, shadowing, and a flexible schedule. For more information, contact the Novato History Museum at 897-4320 or e-mail novatoguild@gmail.com. Orientation will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 4 at the Druids Hall, 801 Grant Avenue.



Novato—50 Years Ago (January, February, March 1958)

by Bill Almeida

“Novato—50 Years Ago” is a collection of items culled by Bill Almeida from the January, February, and March issues of the Novato Advance newspapers in the collection of the Novato History Museum and microfilm at the Novato Library. We hope you enjoy reading the names and happenings of 1958.

- Supervisor William Gness hopes to widen and resurface Center Road by seeking property owners to deed land and pay costs of curbing and guttering street while the county pays for resurfacing the road.

- The 1957 fire loss was Novato areas largest since 1952. Loss for the year amounted to \$39,250.25. There were 318 calls for fire department assistance. The months of July, August, and September accounted for the most calls when the hot dry weather induced a number of grass fires in the area.

- Henry Bormolini of Louis Bormolini and Sons, Novato contractor, has been awarded the contract to build the Tiburon Theatre to be managed by Don Donahue. The 202-seat theatre will cost near \$80,000 when fully equipped. Donahue, who operates the Novato Theatre, will specialize in art and foreign films and the better Hollywood products.

- Kathy Crandall, 14-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Crandall of Novato was severely injured on Jan. 19 when she was thrown from a horse on Novato Boulevard. Kathy was in Marin General Hospital today suffering from neck injuries. She also received a deep gash in the back of her head which bled profusely. Kathy is a freshman at Novato High School and lives with her parents on Pico Vista.

- Known as a “triple threat” man at Novato High School is Jack Sparrow, a junior student named as

“Hornet Ace.” Jack as been consistent high point man during the current basketball season; he was a heavy scorer as quarterback for the undefeated Hornet football team; and is expected to be an invaluable pitcher when baseball season rolls around. Jack’s hobby is sports, as one might expect. He is an active member of the NHS Lettermen Club.

- Miss Lulu Sutton, beloved Olive School principal announced plans to retire at the end of this school year, after 40 years with the Novato school system. Miss Sutton came to Novato when the school system consisted of four teachers and some 120 students. She was principal of Grant School for years until 1948. She also taught eighth grade at the same time. She was named principal of Olive School when it opened in 1952.

- A daughter was born to Edward and Clarice Mazzoleni on Jan 8. The baby was born at Marin General Hospital.

- William Q. Wright, Jr., former Marin County supervisor, and Mrs. Wright will return to Novato in July, it was disclosed by their son William. The Wrights went to Saudi Arabia in June 1956 where Wright has been serving on a water engineering project for the Arabian government. The Wrights will tour Europe for two months before returning home.

- Erwin Scheller, 28, president of the Novato Junior Chamber of Commerce, narrowly escaped death on Feb. 4 in a spectacular accident in which his small English sports car was nearly buried beneath a 68,000 pound truck. The accident occurred near the Hamilton Air Force Base main gate. A huge truck clobbered the rear end of Scheller’s car and nearly missed crushing him against the dashboard and windshield. He was treated at the air base

dispensary and released.

- The Pacific Gas & Electric Company has begun a survey to determine the estimated cost of extending natural gas to the Black Point area. The announcement came in a letter from a P.G.& E. company attorney to Mrs. Edna Nolan, 80 Harbor Drive, gas chairman of the Black Point Improvement Club.

- The Novato School District board of trustees voted to name the proposed elementary school on the Robertson site the Lulu C. Sutton School, after the Olive School principal who is retiring after 40 years in Novato’s school system. The property is located on Center Road, west of Crescent Court.

- George Gness, deputy county clerk and life long resident of Novato, saved the life of Antonio DeSousa Martins on Feb. 16. Martins, 60, was found floating in a water-filled ditch near the Ryan Ranch west of Novato. His overturned car was nearby, wheels spinning and motor running. While Gness commenced artificial respiration, Mrs. Gness ran for assistance. The Novato Fire Department responded and resuscitated Martins.

- The Stork Club. A girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sands on Feb. 25 at Marin General Hospital. A son was born in March to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Paladini residing in Lodi. Frank is manager of the California Poultry Producers plant at Lodi.

- Vernon Dwelly of Novato, a sergeant in the California Highway Patrol, said he was stunned and disappointed at having to withdraw from the campaign for the sheriff’s office. Dwelly, 52, had asked for a 90-day leave of absence to carry on his campaign for the sheriff’s office. State Highway Commissioner B. R.

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In Memoriam

The Guild mourns the loss of the following members:

Jack Buttimer

Julie Grantz

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

The Family of Jack Buttimer.

The Family of Julie Grantz

Dean Cox on the death of his wife Thelma

Sue Volker on the death of her mother-in-law, Elsie Volker

MEMORIAL PLAQUE ADDITIONS

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.

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. By donating appreciated stock investments, you will:

- avoid capital gains taxes,
- receive a sizeable charitable deduction, and
- support the Guild in "preserving Novato's history."

Plaques cost \$250 per person named.

Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

NOVEMBER 2007

901 Sherman Project—Yvette Jackson suggested that the Guild should consider putting together historical photographs to be hung in the interior of the renovated building. There are two niches that will have display cases, and we could put some historical artifacts in them as well.

Curator's Report—The wood on the south side of the museum was being replaced as Samantha Kimpel spoke. Arcadia Publishing wanted to know if we had signed the contract to have them publish a book on Hamilton Field. After some discussion Ron Vela made a motion that we sign the contract. The motion passed.

Hamilton Museum—Ray Dwelly reported that there is a signed contract to begin the EIR on the Museum, at a cost of \$15,000, to let us know if there is any lead in the paint. It should take 4-6 weeks to complete the report.

DECEMBER 2007

New Business—A motion was made to donate a "Novato Township" book to the Opus Dei organization to thank them for their hospitality and tour of the Trumbull Mansion that many guild members attended in November. The motion passed unanimously.

Curator's Report—Samantha Kimpel reported that the signed contract was sent to Arcadia publishing for the book on Hamilton Field. She is working on marketing, for our Museum, for her graduate class.

901 Sherman Project—Yvette Jackson reported that things are slowly moving forward and an EIR should be done by the end of February. A fund raising committee is being formed to help with some of the non-essential items and defray some of the other expenses.

JANUARY 2008

Curator's Report—The Hamilton Field book committee had their first meeting and have made a great deal of progress already. All materials must be submitted to the publisher by March 18. There were no new accessions to report.

Treasurer's Report—Charlotte Urban reported the total of all accounts is \$229,808.25.

Hamilton Museum—Ray Dwelly received an email from the city stating that the EIR report is completed (checking to see if there is any lead in the paint). When Ray contacted Page Construction they had not heard from the city so they cannot start the project yet.

New Director Diane Campbell

Diane is a resident of Hamilton, who relocated to Novato from Atlanta, GA in 2003. Originally from New Jersey, she moved to NYC to work in banking and community relations with Citibank. She earned a BS in accounting from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1985 and received certification as a CPA the same year.

Besides banking, her career experiences have included financial roles in manufacturing, telecom and software development sectors. She is currently employed as a controller for a family owned high-end hair salon in San Francisco.

Diane has been actively involved in community volunteering for many years. Some volunteer activities include the following: IRS Tax return preparation for low-income and the elderly, team development with Hands-On-Atlanta, and food preparation for Meals on Wheels.

Novato Memories

by Jim McNern



Joan Marzell Quinn

Joan Marzell Quinn was born in the Petaluma General Hospital. She attended Novato Grammar School, Olive and Marion Schools, and was in the first graduating class out of Novato High School in 1959. Joan now lives in Cary, North Carolina - but comes back to Novato several times a year to visit her family. She shares her Novato memories in this March edition of the Novato Historian. Joan remembers:

- Living with her parents Sam and Josephine Marzell and sister Kathy at 1459 Arroyo Avichi Road. (Arroyo Avichi Road was later named Indian Valley Road. It was the part of Indian Valley Road that started at Hill Road and went out to the Pacheco Ranch and joined the rest of Indian Valley Road.)
- Her neighbors: the Liebs, Pronzinis, Strockbines, Trabucchis, Guibbinis, Cabezzas, Penhales, Murphys, Clarks, Rivasplatas, and Gladys Johnston.
- Attending Novato Grammar School and having Mrs. Estes, Miss Dalessi, Miss Dolcini and Mrs. Clark as her teachers.
- Attending Olive School and having her teacher, Mrs. Kay Steele, pick her up each morning and drive her home in the afternoon.
- Moving to Marion School and having Miss O'Brien, Mr. Farris,



From the Staff Desk

by Samantha Kimpel
Museum Curator

Volunteer Recognition and Orientation

By the time this publication arrives in the mailboxes, all members should have received an invitation to the Volunteer Party and Orientation on March 4, 2008 at Druids Hall (10 a.m.-12 p.m.). We will honor and celebrate the contributions of Museum volunteers in 2007, as well as orient and welcome new volunteers.

The program will include recognition for the nearly 50 volunteers who contributed in excess of 2100 cumulative hours to the operation of the Museum in the previous year. We will also answer questions about opportunities to participate as a museum volunteer and provide a preview orientation for new volunteers. The party will conclude with special break-out sessions for informal training and to share refresher information regarding specific volunteer opportunities (including 3rd grade tour

docs, general museum docs, and research & collection management assistants).

If you haven't already sent in your RSVP and would like to attend, please call the museum at any time and leave a message at 415-897-4320. If you are a new or prospective volunteer, please join us to ask questions and learn more about what our fabulous volunteers do!

Novato Produce & Dairy Packaging

In your scrapbooks or personal collections, do you have samples of packaging or historic labels for agricultural products that were produced in Novato? There has been a general resurgence in interest in items such as fruit crate labels, especially from the first half of the 20th century. These

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Mr. Wineland, and Mr. Patterson as teachers.

- Her classmates: Yvette Borloz, Pam Kingsley, Geraldine Antonio, Rebecca McClelland, Jack Sparrow, Chris Avery, Jeff Lang, Jay Johnson, Dick Olrich, Charlotte Cummins, Hansten Warner, Nikki Brashear, George Gnos, Nancy Phinney, Lewis Fredrickson, Ross Redding, Roy Wilfert, Terry Brownlee and Gary Edwards.
- Her mother buying fabric from Breuer's Dry Goods Store to make Halloween costumes on her treadle sewing machine.
- Everyone dressing up in costumes for the Halloween parade at school and trick-or-treating up in Petaluma.
- Getting graham crackers and chocolate milk at school and listening to "The Standard School

Broadcast" each week in class.

- "Bank Day" at school when she would bring in dimes, nickels and pennies to add to her savings account.
- Exchanging valentines in class and making individual valentine boxes at home and then bringing them to class.
- Superintendent William J. J. Smith bandaging her skinned knee when she fell on the playground. He was a very nice, calm man.
- Miss Lulu Sutton was a very stern principal who put the fear of God in you. She was respected by everyone.
- The May Day celebrations at school when children from surrounding schools would come for a play day.
- A "May Queen" was selected and children danced around the maypole.

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Novato—50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N-3

Caldwell denied Dwelly’s request because of a “shortage of personnel.” Dwelly said he would throw his support to Sheriff David Menary, the incumbent.

- The Novato Advance editorial of Mar. 7 was extremely critical of the sheriff’s office for not doing more to stop vandalism and destruction of the abandoned Grant Avenue School.

Historic Placemats Available at Museum

by Pat Johnstone

Now available at the museum is a series of laminated table placemats. They are 14”x11” in size and feature a variety of scenes of old Novato in black and white photography. The price for each placemat is \$5.



There are ten different scenes of Novato available. The placemat shown here is a view of Grant Avenue, circa 1924. Other scenes include views of Grant Avenue in different time periods, scenes of the railroad depot, the Flat Iron Building, Black Point Inn, and the Presbyterian Church, now our city hall.

These placemats are quite unique and worth a trip to the museum.

Reminder!
Old Timer’s Day
Old Timers’ Day and the 1958 8th grade class reunion from Marion School will be Saturday, May 31, at the Druids Hall at the corner of Grant and Reichert Avenue.

New Director Stephen Schwindt

Stephen Schwindt is the son of Ad and Gloria Schwindt. He grew up on a small farm in west Novato, attended Novato schools, was active in 4-H club work and the Novato Junior Horsemen, and graduated from Novato High School in 1966.

He graduated with a degree in Philosophy from Sonoma State University in 1971. Stephen attended horseshoeing school in British Columbia and has been shoeing horses ever since.

He married Barbara Wagner in 1980 and is the father of one daughter, Rachel. His hobbies are reading, gardening, cooking, leathercraft and horsemanship.

New Director Cynthia Motsinger

Cindy was raised in Keyes in the San Joaquin Valley near Modesto.

She came to Marin County in 1959 to attend Dominican College. Her first job was in 1963 at West Novato School teaching sixth grade. When San Ramon School opened in 1968, she moved there where she remained for thirty five years.

She loved teaching the history of Novato to her classes. Her third graders took yearly field trips to the Novato History Museum. Cindy retired from teaching in 2003, ending a forty year career with the Novato Unified School District.

Since retirement she has become involved with the museum as a Wednesday docent and team leader. She now is one of the third grade program coordinators, organizing and arranging tours for third grade classes.

Cindy has lived in Novato since 1966. She has a son and daughter. Cindy enjoys gardening, the ballet, walking, and traveling (her most recent trip was to Portugal this past summer to visit her heritage).

Novato’s Treasures

COMMUNITY HOUSE



The Novato Community House was constructed in 1922. It was the center of many local activities. There were dances, concerts, civic meetings, city council meetings, graduations and numerous other activities.

Welcome New Guild Members

November 1, 2007 to
January 31, 2007

Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Byers
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Byers
Lovetta L. Jones
Tom Kopshever
Michael Halkovich
Carol Maddox
Linda Moretti
Michael Patterson
Julie & Dennis Pimentel
Sharon Smith Safina

Upgraded Membership to Patron Level:

Kay and David Price-Jones
Louise and Bill Koenig

Upgraded to Life Membership level:

Michael Read

Please support our Guild business members:

Acme Screen Printing
Bank of Marin*
House of Daniel's, Inc.
Kelly Associates Architects AIA
Kitchen at 868 Grant
Marin Landscape Materials*
McIsaac Dairy*
Novato Horsemen*
Now and Then Antiques
Pini Hardware
Suburban Alternatives Land Trust
The Wright Salon*
Zenith Instant Printing*

*Thank you to our business who
have renewed for 2008
If you have a question about mem-
bership call, Edna Manzoni
Membership Chairman
415-892-9603.

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



From the Staff Desk

Continued from Page N-5

beautifully illustrated labels are graphically interesting and tell a colorful story about an area's agricultural economy. They also often stand on their own as pieces of advertising art.

We have been researching the history of cheese making and factories in Novato, and I became interested in finding as many examples of labels as possible after seeing some great examples from the Novato French Cheese Company (thanks to Marie Salmina for sharing items from her personal collection and the research of Mary Haas).

While we would love to have examples of original labels and packaging from the Novato's agricultural life (including dairy and produce) in the museum collection, it would be wonderful if those of you with items in your collection would share copies of labels from local producers for our archives. Also, please contact me if you have good samples of these items that you may be willing to loan to the museum for an exhibit on early agricultural packaging and/or cheese production.

Museum Accessions Update

In the past six months, there have been a number of additions to the museum collection. Here are some highlights from those recent accessions.

Stationery and imprinted items (such as pens and pencils) from Oscar's Paint Store, donated by Pat Hogue.

Photographs and archival material concerning baseball player Lefty Gomez, donated by Edna & Bob Manzoni.

4-H pins, hat, belt buckle, and photographs from Clifford Orr's time in Novato 4-H, donated by Mrs. Darlene Orr.

I.D. badge and service medals for Oscar H. Britton, US Army Air Forces, stationed at Hamilton Field, donated by Dick Altman.

All of these items help tell the social, economic, and cultural stories of Novato. At the end of the year, we will print a complete, detailed list of accessions. Until then, thank you for your continued donations to the collection!

AN INVITATION TO A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE HISTORICAL

Sweetser DeLong Mansion (Trumbull Manor) in Novato

FEATURING

Pro Musica Strings

PERFORMING WORKS BY

Jaume Torrent, Guitarist

One of Spain's most important musicians, Sr. Torrent has received many international awards including President of the Jury at the internationally renowned Subiaco Competition in Italy, and the highest award of achievement, the coveted Gold Medal from the Republic of the Ukraine.

Joseph Gold, Violinist

Mr. Gold has been praised on four continents for his brilliant interpretations of the great repertoire for violin of the nineteenth century violin virtuosos of Paganini, Sarasate, Bazzini, and others. He is a noted musicologist as well as a performer.

Debbie Dare, Violinist/Violist

Ms. Dare has an international reputation. She was first violinist for state orchestras in Germany and has soloed with orchestras in Bulgaria, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, and Mexico.



SUNDAY, MAY 4TH | 3:00 P. M.

Trumbull Manor

50 RICA VISTA, NOVATO

Refreshments will be served during intermission.

Admission is \$15 with a reservation by phone (415-892-3319)
\$20 at the door

For more information, please call Liz Gabriel at 415-892-3319

PLEASE PARK ALONG CENTER ROAD



**Trumbull
Manor
Tour**
by Mike Clancy

*L*ate this summer approximately 30 members of the Historical Guild attended a tour of the Trumbull mansion, now called Trumbull Manor. We saw a wonderful restoration and update of this fine old home.

*N*ow owned by the Catholic organization Opus Dei, Trumbull Manor is used as a guest home, retreat and conference center. Here you see the front of the house, with its expansive front porch. Due to the development of the surrounding neighborhood, this is now the back yard. The main entrance is the original back door. There is a small parking area and a nicely landscaped yard at that entrance. Several millions of dollars were spent restoring the building.



*T*his is a view of the chapel. It was built as an addition to the house and is the only major modification of the building. The fine craftsmanship and art shown here is reflected throughout the building. Dawn Scannell, manager, gives us a short lecture about Opus Dei and its use of the mansion. She was interested to learn that many of our members knew things about the house that she did not know. A few of our members present had played in the house when they were young children.



Guild members were served tea and home-made cookies in the large dining room. The mansion is set up much like a hotel. The staff can handle a maximum of 26 overnight guests at a time.



The kitchen is another example of the quality of the craftsmanship throughout. This view shows only half of the kitchen and its equipment. All food prepared here is fresh and homemade. No frozen or pre-prepared products are used. Local markets provide all ingredients. There is no live-in staff. Most staff live in Novato. When the priests are not there, the home is available for tours. It is also used for public events several times a year.

This is a typical bedroom. All guest rooms are simply furnished. The rooms each serve from one to three guests. The staff has to be able to turn over the whole house in four hours. It's a real job when 26 guests are expected immediately after 26 leave. The home now has central heating and the bedroom fireplaces are sealed and not used.



Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-5

- Graduating from Marion School in the multi-purpose room in June of 1955.

- Taking piano lessons from Mrs. Yvonne Borloz for ten years.

- Starting as a high school freshman in September 1955 at Marion School in the afternoons, and having some of the same teachers she'd had in elementary school.

- Her class was always the oldest class throughout their high school years.

- Riding the school bus was great fun with Walt Strayer and Peggy as drivers.

- Jack Sparrow would pick the kids up when the bus driver was sick or didn't show up.

- Dr. Ralph Weseman was the Marzell's family doctor. He was very calm and low keyed. He was the kind of doctor you read about in storybooks.

- Getting her tonsils taken out in Dr. Weseman's office.

- Having to stay in a dark room when you had the measles, and Dr. Weseman making house calls to see you when you were really sick.

- Her dad, Sam, playing Santa Claus for many years at the firehouse, and handing out candy and oranges to Novato children.

- Her sister Kathy's observation that Santa Claus wore the same boots that her dad wore.

- Wrapping gifts at Irv Link's Mens Store at Christmastime and Fathers' Day with Rebecca McClelland.

- The day the Pronzini's cow fell in the well and had to be rescued.

- The day a major earthquake hit while she was in Mrs. Palmer's math class at Novato High and the windows were swaying back and forth.

- Moving to the Novato High School site on Arthur Street. It was just an open bare field with lots of dirt and the original high school buildings.

- Novato High School had sports

teams right from the beginning. The standout athletes were: Jack Sparrow, George Gness, Jay Johnson, Pete Ferrerese, Dick Olrich and Gary Edwards

- Making and throwing snowballs the day it snowed while attending Novato High.

- The area now called "Oldtown" was Novato's downtown.

- Women would sit under a strange device in beauty shops while getting a permanent.

- Shopping on Saturdays with her parents at Rayburn's Market, Breuer's Dry Goods Store, Sanitary Meat Market and Babe Pronzini's Dress Shop.

- Getting "Green River Floats" at the fountain in Novato Pharmacy.

- Going to San Francisco by Greyhound bus to see the Ice Follies.

- Seeing Knutte Real Estate signs on houses for sale around town.

- Joining the Novato 4-H Club as a junior member when she was 9 years old.

- Having 4-H meetings in the "Club Car" that was located behind the Community House.

- Learning to sew on a "Singer Featherweight" sewing machine in the 4-H Club Car and having Mrs. Pearl Lieb as her 4-H sewing leader.

- Having Marie Stafford and Tut Anderson as her 4-H Cooking leaders.

- Making all of her own clothes and even prom dresses with the sewing skills learned in 4-H.

- Entering many "Make it With Wool" Contests.

- Selling 4-H turkey dinner basket tickets as a fund raiser for the Novato 4-H Club.

- Raising fat lambs for her sheep project and selling them at auction at the Sonoma County Fair.

- Spending many hours making 4-H floats in Reno and Babe Pronzini's barn for the Annual 4-H Parades and Western Weekend Parades.

- Getting nicknamed "Princess Lightfoot" after falling through the loft in the Pronzini barn.

- Passing out "earwig bait" throughout town as a Novato 4-H Club community service project.

- Meeting 4-H'ers from throughout Marin County at Los Posadas 4-H Club Camp located on Howell Mountain near Angwin in Napa County. Memories of the freezing cold water in the swimming pool, sleeping outside, hikes, tribes, campfires, skits, camp food and songs are etched in her mind.

- The day her dad lost part of a finger while working as an oiler on heavy equipment at Novato Dam.

- Watching the Portuguese parade each year, and having sopa at the I.D.E.S.I. Hall, seeing the platters of food, and visiting with many Portuguese friends.

- Being an attendant for the Queen at one of the annual Portuguese parades and marching down Grant Avenue.

- Her dad being the first paid full time fireman in Novato.

- Knowing that when you heard 3 fire whistles blow, there was a fire somewhere in town.

- Diablo Road would flood at the bridge during severe winter storms and cars would go into the creek.

- The homes in the Nave Gardens area would flood during rainy winters.

- Arroyo Avichi Creek, behind the Marzell property, was a favorite place to visit during the summer.

- Her parents raising 5,000 to 6,000 laying hens.

- Buying baby chicks from Sam Smith at the Penngrove Hatchery.

- People would come from San Francisco to buy eggs. The price was \$1.00 a dozen for eggs.

- Randy, the feed salesman from McNear's in Petaluma, coming by each week to take the feed order.

Continued on Page N-11

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-10

- Mr. Costa, the sackman, who would come by and buy burlap sacks.
- Always eating fried chicken on Sunday.
- Her dad and sister Kathy getting sprayed by a skunk and having to bury their clothes.
- Novato High School's early teachers: Mrs. Stafford, Mrs. Palmer,

Miss Hunninghaus, Mrs. Lester, Mrs. Mayo, Mr. Denegri, Mr. Washburn and Mr. Cutler.

- Being named 1961 Marin County 4-H All Star.
- Attending the National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago in 1959.
- Always seeing many deer, fox,

raccoons, squirrels, skunks and a variety of birds in the Indian Valley area.

- Knowing many old Novato families with the names: Salmina, Baccaglio, Lafranchi, Gness, McClelland, Manzoni, McNern, Keena, Nunes, Pacheco, Grossi and Busher.

THE GIFT SHOPPE

The Museum Gift Shoppe has the perfect unique Novato gift!

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- **Novato Township*** the definitive history of Novato by May Ungemach \$30.50
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Membership Form

Please mail checks to **Novato Historical Guild, 75 Rowland Way, Suite 200, Novato, CA 94945.**

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

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|---|---------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (full time) membership | \$5 | year |
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Notice
General Membership Meeting

of the

Novato Historical Guild

Saturday, March 1, 2008—2 p.m.

Margaret Todd Senior Center

1560 Hill Road

Our guest speaker will be author and historian, Fred Codoni, from Fairfax who will talk about the Northwestern Pacific Railroad and its impact on Marin County.

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Preserving Novato's History

Feature Section

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January- March 2008

The Novato Historian

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Here we go again – still!

By John A. Trumbull

With the issue of SMART and the future use of the railroad right of way back in the forefront as an issue for Novato voters, perhaps a re-exposition of the history of rail service in our valley would be timely. This topic has not been covered by the Guild since our issue of September 2004 wherein Jerry Peters set forth the status of the Novato Depot (much of which is now demolished) at length. For what follows immediately I am indebted to his article and to the Guild newsletter of March 1993 wherein Jack Eisen wrote an article on the early history of the railroad in Novato based in part on the historical research of Gilbert Kneiss and Richard H. Dillon, two railroad historians.

It was one October afternoon in 1874 that men from San Rafael and Petaluma met at Johnson's store in Novato (the halfway point between the towns) and formed the Sonoma & Marin Railroad Company. At that time the North Bay's rail service ran from Cloverdale south to the ferry terminal for San Francisco steamers on the Petaluma River near Lakeville in Sonoma county. The new rail company was intended to provide a more direct link from Petaluma through San Rafael to "the City."

Under-funded and lacking decisive management, the first effort at construction in 1875 ran out of money in the middle of the Novato salt flats. The pieces were then sold to Peter Donahue, owner of the Cloverdale line, who by September 1, 1877, pushed

the rails across a drawbridge over Novato Creek and through the brand new Puerto Suello tunnel into San Rafael. Sporadic service started in 1878, but was hampered by the lack of connections to southern Marin (which had a different system of trains) and to the ferry docks at San Quentin and Sausalito. It should be noted, however, that despite the difficulty of the double transfers, President Rutherford B. Hayes accompanied by General William Tecumseh Sherman brought a special train through Novato enroute to the Petaluma agricultural fair. By 1882, Donahue had completed the line to Tiburon and connected with ferry service there. By 1884, milk trains began carrying Novato's milk and cheeses to the San Francisco markets. Novato built its first train station sometime around 1880. In 1890, Mr. Donahue died. By 1898, the California Northwestern Railway was operating the line which it extended to Ukiah.

Novato built a new and larger train station in 1903, after first relocating the first station, a portion of which still stands behind Druid's Hall today. The



design of the second station was based on the pattern of those being built by the Southern Pacific RR throughout its line. In 1907, the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company (fondly known as the NWP) was formed by the Southern Pacific Company and its rival, the Santa Fe Railroad Company. The new company took control of the line, consolidated train and ferry service to San Francisco in Sausalito (where it remained until 1941) and extended the rails to Eureka by 1914.

In 1916 fire destroyed Novato's second depot, and a third station of similar design was constructed on the same site. The Santa Fe sold its interests in the NWP to Southern Pacific in 1929.

The following editorial was printed in the *Novato Advance* on July 6, 1929, by publisher William Hanen (whose home at the time was on Sherman Avenue, two blocks from the train station).

All that Novato needs, now that the government has decided to establish the army bombing unit at our door, to launch us on a steady growing basis is a commuters early morning train. [Editor's note: the Army reference is to the decision to fund construction of the Hamilton Air Force Base.] During the past week we have heard of three families who are likely to sell their homes and go elsewhere because the transportation to San Francisco does not meet the requirements of city employers. Early transportation is our greatest problem, and something must be done. Nature offers this section a wonderful opportunity for development, and unless the railroad company is willing to assist in the development and share in the benefits we must look elsewhere.

There are plans suggested to meet the situation, but the railroad is the logical means, and while there is hope in this direction every effort should be put forth to force action or an acknowledgment from the railroad that nothing will be done to give the necessary relief, then the next best thing will be in order. No person or organization can stay progress for any length of time and with all the open doors before it; Novato and northern Marin county cannot be kept in subjection [sic] much longer. This paper favors train service to any other, but if the company sees fit to prognosticate [sic] beyond reason there will be nobody to blame but itself. The train service

in other ways is very satisfactory, and all that is asked is the commuters be landed in San Francisco in time to reach their places of employment by 8 o'clock. A gasoline car to connect with the electric train at San Rafael would be hailed with delight—anything to accommodate the thirty odd commuters now living here and the scores more who are only waiting adequate means of transportation.

It would seem that there was some attempt to respond to this announced need, because during the early 1930's the train schedule lists six steam trains in each direction to serve either the Russian River area or Eureka (with more being added for the busy summer vacation period). By 1935, service declined to two trains in each direction, in part because the rail branch serving the Russian River was abandoned. By 1959, all passenger service had been terminated. The SP, through the NWP, ran freight activity with decreasing frequency until 1970, when it stopped altogether. In 1992, the NWP was merged into the SP, and ceased to exist as a separate entity.

Novato had hope of service restoration and the third depot remained a highly visible building from both eastern Grant Avenue and the new freeway off-ramp onto DeLong Avenue. Since the building and land were owned by the railroad company, neither the City nor local volunteers could effectively do much to preserve the building, which was suffering from neglect. For a short time the railroad company allowed an explorer scout troop interested in model railroading under the supervision of Robert Rankin to use the building. Unfortunately the troop disbanded, and the building stood vacant again. By 1982, it was a venue for vandals, homeless vagrants and drug dealings. In 1982, fire swept the complex, badly damaging the freight depot. Thanks to the perseverance of Jerry Peters and several of his fellow volunteers, permission was eventually obtained to annually cover the dilapidated roof of the passenger depot with a blue plastic tarp and to surround the buildings with a chain-link fence to reduce potential unauthorized intrusion and incidentally to preserve what little remained.

Past City Councils have declared the train depot a building of historical interest, and while repair was

not feasible after 1982, reconstruction is possible. The plans for the building are obtainable, and the site has been transferred away from the ownership of the railroad company. There has been much debate as to whether the size and design of the station is conducive to modern use. The general plan of the City of Novato does not envision a train stop at this location, even if service is resumed on the adjacent line. The cities of Sonoma and Sebastopol have remodeled their stations and converted them into small museums. The station in Petaluma has been restored, but I do not believe it is being used. It will be of interest to us all to see what develops on the site of the train depot and the old Pini feed mill now that Whole Foods has begun construction of a market topped by three levels of living units there.

Wait, there is more —

The train depot property is surrounded by Novato history, as any third grader who has taken our tour will tell you. On the corner of what is left of Scott Street is the Yelmorini Flatiron building, constructed shortly after 1900. This was not where Mr. Yelmorini had his primary business, and the urban legend is that one significant purpose for its construction was to block the view of persons descending from the train from seeing the competing saloons in the area, especially the Novato Hotel across Scott Street and John Loustaunau's Club, the two story building on the southwest corner of Grant Ave and Reichert Avenue now called Druid's Hall. The triangular structure has housed a number of businesses during its 100 year plus lifetime. Ed Carlile worked there at first as the Wells Fargo agent in Novato, and this is where he first started selling items that later graduated into the Carlile Hardware store at 815 Grant Avenue. Other businesses operating from that location have been The Novato Advance newspaper (1919-23), the John Birch Society library (in the 1960's), a basket shop and an insurance agency among others. A sign of the age of this building, and the building that was Yelmorini's Depot Saloon next to it, is the exterior plumbing that was added to accommodate indoor bathrooms years after the initial construction had been completed. (Yelmorini's

saloon is the blue, two story building whose back door opens about 18 inches below the surface of Scott Street. It was designed with the front door facing the train station, which would be the natural source of the customers for its 50 cent lunches and 5 cent schooners of beer.)

Across the railroad tracks from the depot at 910 Railroad Avenue is the 14 room Oliver-Field home. It was built in 1893, by George Oliver, who was at the time the manager of the California Creamery just across the tracks. In 1894, that creamery was producing 4,000 pounds of butter and 5,000 pounds of cheese each week, and buying almost the entire milk output of the DeLong ranch. George and Margie's daughter, Jennie, married Arthur Field in San Francisco in 1904, and after the earthquake, moved back to the Railroad Avenue house. Dr. John Henry Kuser, who lived for a time in the house now owned by the City of Novato across DeLong Ave. from the city hall / church and who knew that Jennie Field had trained as a nurse in the mid 1890's, persuaded the Fields to convert the house to a hospital. In 1907, Dr. Kuser, who was the physician for Marin County, moved to San Rafael and brought Dr. Anthony into his practice in Novato. Dr. Anthony and Jennie Field ran the hospital until Dr. Anthony joined the Army in World War I. There being no one to take his place, the Novato Sanatorium closed down.

Please note, however, that having a baby was not necessarily reason to go to the hospital. In 1906, Mrs. Leon Hiribarren and her husband Captain Leon, built the home at 904 Railroad Avenue next to the (then future) Novato Sanatorium. Mrs. Hiribarren frequently accompanied Dr. Kuser on his Novato rounds, and although she was not a registered nurse, she was the attending midwife for many of the babies born in early Novato. She was later joined in these acts of community service by her daughter-in-law, Annie Hiribarren. Captain Leon was first introduced to Novato as the skipper of the 23-ton schooner, "California" which transported freight from the landing on Novato Creek to San Francisco. In the mid-1880's he left the sea and became manager of Adolph Scown's Halfway House (in the vicinity of the present Human Needs Second Center on Novato

Blvd.) In 1899, he moved to the Novato Hotel on the southwest corner of Grant Avenue and Scott Street in the area we now call "Old Town." Within a year or two he retired, turning his duties over to his son, Augere.

The Novato Historical Guild has proudly conducted walking tours of this historic area for almost all the third grade classes in the Novato school system for more than the past eight years. Almost without excep-

tion the children, and the adults accompanying them as class chaperones, have expressed their interest in this history. They remark that they have a deeper appreciation for the community in which they are living as a result of this experience. The Guild would like to see this historic area preserved as much as possible for future generations to enjoy. Unlike the communities of Petaluma and Sonoma, the character of early Novato is preserved in only this location.



This picture taken between 1912 and 1918 shows the second train station in the lower center of the picture at the base of the black tree. (See the boxcars near the trees at the right edge of the picture.) In the foreground are the Hiribarren and Oliver-Field houses on Railroad Ave. facing the depot. The Flatiron building is obscured by the tree, but the Yelmorini's "Depot Inn" appears over the top of the depot. Grant Avenue (unpaved) curves toward the right upper edge of the picture, with the Novato Inn partially showing from behind the tree and Loustaunau's Hall (Druids Hall) being the 2-story building partially covered by the tip of the tree. Other easily identifiable buildings are the Presbyterian church (upper left corner) across the street from the Simmons house, behind which is the barn that later became the Hanen House on Machin Avenue. Note the church manse and the Morrison house are not yet existent. The second Novato Grammar school with its bell tower is above and to the right of the church. The school steeple points to the Sweetser mansion which used to be at the end of Elm Avenue. Note that Grant Avenue ends at what we now call Redwood Boulevard.