



Hamilton Museum Making Headway

By John Trumbull

The Guild is happy to report that the renovation project at the Hamilton Museum is under budget

and ahead of schedule. This is due in large part to the constant attention and resourcefulness of Ray Dwelly, our

volunteer project superintendent, and the flexibility and cooperation of our official contractor, Bob Lowry. The Bob and Ray team can be found personally working on site almost any day of the week.

Guild volunteers that have consistently donated about three work days per week are Roland Fuette, Bob Manzoni, Tom Keena and Dan Johnstone. Others, such as John Trumbull and Diane Campbell, have contributed also, but not quite as regularly.

As a result of these efforts the following has been achieved: The office is prime coat painted and the drop ceiling installed; it is operational. The same is true of both bathrooms. The reception area walls are prime coat painted. The library has had the sheet rock installed, awaits finish "mudding" before its first coat of paint. The large display area (the equipment bay) is partially sheet-rocked, but needs considerably more attention before the electrical lines are installed and the ceiling is ready for painting. Finally the small equipment bay on the west side of the building hasn't had any significant attention as of yet. If work progresses at the current pace, the firehouse should be ready to host the September general meeting. (I personally have waited more than 10 years to make that prediction!!)



Ray Dwelly, museum project superintendent, at work in his temporary office, still under renovation, in the Hamilton Museum.

Old Timers' Day Celebration

The Novato Historical Guild will host the annual Old Timers' Day meeting on Saturday, June 6, at noon at the Margaret Todd Senior Center, 1560 Hill Road. This meeting will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 1959 8th grade graduating class from the Novato School District. See Bette Benaski Holloway's story about the 1959 class on page N-9.

The June 6 meeting will start at noon with a light lunch. Graduates

will receive their lunch free of charge. Other attendees will be asked for a \$5.00 contribution. After lunch, the 1959 graduates will be introduced to share their school and Novato memories.

Many present and former Novato residents enjoy the opportunity to visit with old friends at Old Timers' Day. Guild members, guests and prospective members are invited to attend.

The Novato Historian

Published March, June, September, and December by the Novato Historical Guild, a California 501(c)3 non-profit corporation formed November 18, 1976. Contents © 2009 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 2009 Officers

President	Ron Vela
Vice President	Mike Read
Secretary	Kathryn Hansen
Treasurer	Charlotte Urban

Board of Directors

Dick Altman	Stephen Schwindt
Cindy Motsinger	Pat Johnstone
Edna Manzoni	Roland Fuetter
Mike Silva	Diana Goebel
Ray Dwelly	Bill McDill

John Trumbull

Honorary Historian

Eleonora Lafranchi

Committee Chairs

Cemetery	Joe Giari
Finance	Mike Read
Fund Raising	Mike Read
Gift Store	Pat Johnstone
Grants	Edna Manzoni
Hamilton Museum	Ray Dwelly
Hospitality	Diana Goebel
	Edna Manzoni
Mailing	Bill Almeida
Membership	Edna Manzoni
Nominating	Mike Silva
Oral History	Jim McNern
Publicity	Bill McDill
Public Outreach	Roland Fuetter
School Tours	Janice Bazurto
	Anne Lehan
	Cindy Motsinger
Sunshine	Anna Morrison

Newsletter Editorial Board

Bill Almeida	Jim McNern
Pat Johnstone	Tonie Brown
	Mike Read

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 Sept. issue is Aug. 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 Ron Vela

President, Novato Historical Guild

It is said that time flies by when you're having fun. The first quarter of this year has flown by so we must be having a great time. We have had a very active first Quarter. We have had to deal with a City budget crisis that caused us to almost lose the museum curator. Samatha has done a fantastic job and we had to find a way to hold on to her. The board stepped up to the challenge and offered to pay for half of her salary for the next fiscal year starting in July. The City has agreed and voted to fund her position at least for the next year.

If you missed the March General meeting you missed a very interesting and passionate speaker. Vernell Crittendon Jr. spent twenty nine years as a correctional officer at San Quentin State Prison. He has written a book on the subject and has been speaking to groups about his experiences. He had many interesting stories to tell.

John Trumbull Returns to Board



The Guild is pleased to announce that John Trumbull is returning to the Board of Directors. John has been active with the Hamilton Museum project recently and is a past president and newsletter editor of the Guild. In his spare time John likes to build and fly radio controlled antique model airplanes.

The Hamilton museum is coming along nicely. Ray Dwelly has done a remarkable job in putting together a bunch of hard working volunteers. Twenty two volunteers have logged hours to the project. So far as of this writing they have put in a cumulative 1,105 hours into the project. Sixty-five percent of those hours have been done by three individuals: Ray Dwelly, Roland Fuetter, and Robert Lowry. Another twenty percent came from another six individuals. According to Ray they are about forty percent complete. Ray's hopes are that they will host the September General Meeting at the Hamilton museum. Thanks guys for all your sweat equity.

Pat Johnstone has done an outstanding job at the museum gift store. She reports that Arcadia Publishing has sold 1466 copies of the Hamilton book that we published last fall. We are now in the middle of preparing our next book *Novato, Then and Now*. The team is working feverously on getting all the old photographs compiled, captions written and the "Now" photographs taken to meet the publishers deadline of May 19. The team consists of our fearless leader Samatha Kimpel, myself, Edna Manzoni, Janice Bazurto, Yvette Jackson, Sheryl Jones, Michael Read, William Wright, Susan and John Trumbull, Jim McNern, Anne Lehan, Kathryn Hansen, Cynthia Motsinger, Iva Young, Diana Goebel and Stephen Schwindt.

Please don't miss the next General Meeting on Saturday, June 6, 2009. The theme is Novato's 1959 8th Grade Reunion and Old Timers' Day. If you attended last year, you know how much fun it was. Lots of stories told and memories remembered.



Novato—50 Years Ago (April, May and June 1959)

by Bill Almeida and Tonie Brown

“Novato 50 Years Ago” is a collection of items culled by Bill Almeida from the April, May and June issues of the Novato Advance newspapers in the collection of the Novato History Museum and microfilm at the Novato Library. Tonie Brown retypes the articles for the newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading the names and happenings of 1959.

- John Novak is seeking approval of plans to build a 21 lot subdivision on five acres off Center Road between Hill Road and Center Road. Villa Maria is the name of the subdivision.

- Funeral services were held March 31 for one of Novato’s best loved personalities, Miss Lulu Sutton. Miss Sutton died March 28 in Marin General Hospital. She had been stricken with a heart attack in February and suffered a recurrence two days before her passing. She was a teacher and a principal for 40 years prior to her retirement in 1958. Under construction is a new school on Center Road to be known as the Lu Sutton School

- Gerald Hoytt, builder of Marinwood and owner of the Patterson Ranch near downtown Novato, announced he was going ahead with the supermarket portion of his shopping center and would break ground “within the next 30 days.” The 20,000 square foot-plus supermarket will be the first stage of construction. Note: shopping center at 7th Street and Grant Avenue.

- The fabulous “hyperbolic paraboloid” house designed by Sam Harkleroad of Novato on the hilltop south of Alice Street, has been completed and is open for limited inspection. The first house of its kind to be built on the west coast has attracted hordes of visitors. It will be sold to

the highest bidder over the minimum price of \$32,000.

- Novato High star athletes, Jack Sparrow and George Gness, flew to Eugene, Oregon on April 24, returning to Novato on April 26. They are considering Oregon State as well as other colleges. They reported a “terrific” time in Oregon.

- Kenton Stuve, 30, of 1931 Novato Boulevard, was killed in the early morning hours of May 1 when his MGA convertible sports car flipped over pinning him underneath. Stuve was a group supervisor at Marin County Juvenile Hall. Two co-workers were passengers and suffered injuries but were later released from Marin General Hospital.

- Riley Wingate was installed as president of the Black Point Improvement Club in May. He succeeded himself as president, Stan Weiss, Virginia Franklin and Edna Rockstroh were also installed as officers.

- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Manzoni became parents of a girl on April 11. The baby was born at Marin General Hospital.

- Hamilton’s proudest piece of property, a quarter of a million dollar Spanish-style Base Chapel, was officially dedicated May 20. Major General Terence P. Finnegan, Chief of Air Force Chaplains from Washington, D.C., was here to help dedicate the new chapel.

- Mrs. Florence Adams, for 16 years the sole teacher in the one-room Burdell School, announced her intention to resign from her post at the conclusion of the school year in June. She was teaching her dozen students in a classroom of Our Lady of Loretto Parochial School because the Burdell School

had burned down in November 1958.

- Joan Marzell, local high school senior, was designated as a recipient of the Archbishop Mitty Youth Award for 1959. “Her constant and excellent work with the Our Lady of Loretto C.Y.O. unit for the past four years has marked her as an outstanding teenager,” a spokesman said.

- Mrs. Fanny Baccaglio, 81, died June 12 at San Rafael General Hospital. Mrs. Baccaglio had been a resident of Novato since 1900 when she came here from Italy as the bride of James Baccaglio. She made her home with her son, Egidio (Jid), at 1522 South Novato Boulevard.

- Eighty-three Novato High School seniors made history on June 18 as the school’s first graduating class. Judith Koehler was chosen valedictorian of the class and Janet Thomas was salutatorian.

- “Overproduction and subdivisions” were driving the poultryman from business in Novato. That was the consensus of opinion in town. “The day of the chicken rancher with 4,000 to 5,000 birds is at an end” said north Marin supervisor William Gness, owner of a ranch at 623 Olive Avenue. Will Lieb, who owned a flock of 1,500 birds at the east end of Hill Road, said he planned to stay in business and was working for himself and making out. Another poultryman, Franklin Gustafson of Indian Valley, remembered when there were at least 250,000 chickens in Novato. Now he estimates about 25,000 to 30,000.

- Miss Ann Fredrickson became the bride of Robert Bruner on June 27 at the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo. The Reverend Howard Swartz of the Novato Presbyterian Church conducted the service. Mrs.

Continued on page N-6

Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

February 2009

City Budget Update – Guest speaker, Kathy Kormos, handed out “City Partners Outreach” documents. The purpose of Outreach is to solicit help and ideas from the community and to share Department Budget information. The museum is subsidized by approximately \$72,848 per year. A proposed reduction of \$7,300 is for fiscal year 09/10. The Guild needs to make up the shortfall through increased income or decreased expenses.

Curator’s Report – Samantha Kimpel reported the following: a Volunteer Recognition event is scheduled for March 3 at Margaret Todd Senior Center, Jim McCabe completed

approximately 800 images that were attached to artifact records, and the *Novato, Then and Now* book was approved by Arcadia Publishing.

Hamilton Museum – Ray Dwelly reported that plans were submitted to the City and a building permit was issued. Volunteers can now get to work on the inside.

Membership – Edna Manzoni reported that we have 384 members as of February 10, 2009.

March 2009

City Budget Update – Guest speaker, Kathy Kormos, informed the board that the curator’s job would be eliminated on July 1, 2009.

New Business – An Exhibition Committee for the Hamilton Museum was formed. Samantha Kimpel will draft a “Policy for Exhibits” for the museum.

Pat Johnstone suggested that the Guild have a booth at the Farmer’s Market. The purpose would be to solicit new members, sell the *Novato Township* and *Hamilton Field* books and inform the public about the progress of the Hamilton Museum. Pat will contact the Farmer’s Market for more information.

It was suggested that we could sell brick “pavers” with donor names on them for the front of the Hamilton Museum. Ron Vela and Charlotte Urban will research the cost and Ron will work on a presentation package.

Curator’s Report – There is no report yet on the cost of preserving damaged documents in the Time Capsule. The Presbyterian Church and the museum will each receive a copy of or the original document.

901 Sherman Ave Project – Mike Read reported that the project should be finished in August, ahead of schedule.

Hamilton Museum – Ray Dwelly reported that telecommunication lines need to be installed. Water leaks have been detected. Kathy Graves to contact City Maintenance.

Work completed: Office framed, sheet rocked, and wired, and broken windows replaced.

The reception area has studs up on two walls and part of the electrical is installed. There were 301 volunteer hours recorded for February. Total spent to date is \$4,560.50.

City employees left the meeting and the board discussed ways to save the curator’s position. A motion was made and approved to offer to fund half of the curator’s salary for the next fiscal year. The funds would be donated to the City of Novato as a restricted gift at \$3,000 per month for 12 months. Also Ron Vela and John Trumbull agreed to represent the Guild at the next City Hall Council meeting on March 10 to emphasize

Continued on Page N-6

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.

In Memoriam

The Guild mourns the loss of the following members:

Shirley Paladini

Reno Pronzini

Mary “Babe” Pronzini

Margaret Stroeh

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

The Family of Shirley Paladini

Sandra Tomrose and Jon Pronzini on the death of their parents, Reno and “Babe” Pronzini

Dietrich Stroeh on the death of his wife, Margaret

Gail and Jeffrey Pace on the death of her father, Lyle Croisant

Novato Memories

By Jim McNern



Bob Manzoni

Bob Manzoni was born in Petaluma in the old Petaluma General Hospital on 6th Street. He was a member of the 1947 graduating class from Novato Grammar School. Bob has lived in Novato his entire life. He and his wife, Edna, live in the home they built on Indian Valley Road. Bob shares his Novato memories in this June edition of the Novato Historian. Bob remembers:

- Living with his parents, Frank and Frances (Lopus) Manzoni, first on the Sartori Ranch in Black Point, where his dad did the farming; then into a rental house on Vallejo Street on the Salmina property, and then finally to the house at 1101 1st Street where he grew up. (The total price of the lot and house was \$3,800.00 and the new home was built by Phillips Construction from Petaluma.)

- His older sister, Jacqueline, died at 18 months and his brother, Ron, was born when Bob was 10 years old. Ron now lives in San Diego.

- His grandfather, Henry Manzoni, who emigrated from Switzerland, had a big two story house on Grant Avenue and 5th Street. He had a vineyard in the yard, and would crush the grapes each fall to make wine and grappa.

- His uncle, Babe Manzoni, was a



From the Staff Desk

by Samantha Kimpel
Museum Curator

Then and Now

As mentioned by NHG president **Ron Vela**, a volunteer author team has been working hard over the past few months to research, assemble, and write our next Arcadia title: *Novato, Then and Now*. Nearly 80 historic images will be paired with photographs of what exists on those sites now.

Throughout 2010, we will be exploring the concept of “Then and Now” in relation to this book (to be released in late fall 2009), as well as via an exhibit at the museum, and as we celebrate Novato’s 50th Birthday.

Arcadia Publishing states that “comparing our present to our past is how we understand our history.” Knowing what exists on sites now really brings historic photographs to life in an exciting way. We would love to continue our efforts to collect stories and photographs that show a timeline of Novato people and places,

golden gloves boxer and great athlete. Babe worked on the Hare ranch on Skaggs Island.

- His aunt, Lena Jordan Blaski, worked as a cook on the “C” ranch.

- Attending Novato Grammar School and having Miss Baccaglio, Mrs. Busher, Mrs. Steele, and Miss Sutton as his teachers.

- His classmates and friends: Billy Mello, Larry Wright, Charlie Lautrup, Virginia Orr, Kay Murray, Rosemary Lausman, George Wilson, Richard Caudill, Ken Knutson and Paul Scheller.

- His neighbors: Danny Wise on 1st Street; Art and Louie Hughes on Olive Avenue; Bill and Ed Almeida on 2nd Street; Bill Nye on 3rd Street; and Bobby Mattos on Sweetser

- Dressing up in costumes and

and compare the changes through time.

Although it is not possible to display every “Then and Now” that we identify in next year’s exhibit, I would love to put together binders of your own “Then and Now” stories for our Museum visitors and students to peruse. In addition, every story or photograph that we collect will greatly enhance the Museum archives.

So whether your Novato ties extend 150 years or fifteen years, or if you have a particular “Then and Now” illustration of life in Novato in mind (at work, at play, at home, at school or church, etc.), please have fun brainstorming ideas of what you could contribute! I’ll be announcing the deadlines and some for formatting your contributions this fall.

Welcome New Volunteers

I am pleased to welcome five more

Continued on Page N-8

wearing them to school on Halloween.

- Making and exchanging valentines with our friends.

- Singing Christmas carols and performing on the stage in the school auditorium.

- Miss Sutton always wore a long dress, and was a very good marble player. If you had to see Miss Sutton because of some problem, you had to walk past the open door of her classroom and wait in the office until class was over. This was usually more painful than any punishment she gave.

- Being a member of the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.

- Playing “Indian Ball” on 1st Street with Danny Wise.

Continued on Page N-7

50 Years Ago

Continued from page N-3

Swartz was soloist for the event.

- The celebration of the Pini Building's 13th anniversary was really the celebration of the history of Grant Avenue business district west of Highway 101. It was Pini Hardware that pioneered the movement west. After the old Pini store burned in 1945 a big enough lot could not be found on east Grant Avenue so the Pini partners purchased the corner of First and Grant Avenue from Clara Myers.

- Novato Rotarians celebrated the club's 5th anniversary with a dinner-dance April 25 at the Green Mill, north of Petaluma. Clark Palmer was chairman of the event, assisted by past presidents Charles Johnson, Harley McAskill, and James Cuzner. Tickets were \$9.95 per couple which included everything but drinks.

- Louis Saffores regained his seat on the Novato Fire Commission in the April 2 election. He previously

served on the commission from 1953 to 1958. The election brought out only 299 voters, a handful of some 5,000 or so registered voters in the Novato fire district.

- Coach Bill Wood of Novato High's phenom football team is one of the half-dozen Novato High teachers who have submitted their resignations for next year. It has been a popular rumor that this would be Wood's final year at Novato High, in spite of his having "tenure," or permanent status.

- The local post office compiled a "routine list" of projected residences and apartments to be constructed in the Novato area from February 1959 to June 30, 1960, a 17-month period. The list included 1,497 dwelling units. At 3.5 persons per residential unit, it would mean that over 5,000 more people will be here before summer of 1960.

Board Highlights

Continued from Page N-4

Samantha Kimpel's importance to the museum and the museum's importance to the City.

April 2009

New Business – Anna Young (one of the original board members) has resigned; John Trumbull was nominated to fill the vacant position. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Guild will have a booth at the Olompali Heritage Day on May 17.

The 4th of July Parade theme this year is "Novato Going Green." The board will discuss how to decorate the truck next month.

Curator's Report – The museum is getting six reconditioned computers and flat screen monitors from the City of Novato.

The *Novato, Then and Now* book is in progress. The cover has been chosen by the publisher and will be sent to the Guild soon.

Continued on Page N-8

Some Notes On IDESI Hall

Irmandade do Espirito Santo, Independente (IDESI) or Brotherhood of the Divine Holy Ghost was founded June 14, 1906 by a group of thirty immigrants, mostly from the Azores.

Their first meetings were held at Scott Hall. The Hall at 901 Sweetser Ave was built in 1908 by the IDESI members. They added a dance building in 1937. A new bar and adjacent snack bar were built in 1988. A large and modern kitchen with seven gas burners was constructed in 1993.

All are still in use and host celebrations and fundraisers throughout the year, including two crab feeds, a November crafts fair, a steak-and-salmon dinner and car show. Proceeds from these fund-raisers go to local and global charities.

IDESI Hall—1988 Historical Landmark Day



IDESI HALL – HISTORICAL LANDMARK BUILT ON JUNE 14, 1906 BY MEMBERS OF THE HOLY GHOST SOCIETY FOUNDED BY THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE DIVINE HOLY GHOST. DEDICATED APRIL 23, 1988 IN HONOR OF ALL PAST AND PRESENT OFFICERS, MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS OF THE HOLY GHOST SOCIETY BY THE NOVATO HISTORICAL GUILD AND THE GRAND PARLOR, NATIVE SONS OF THE GOLDEN WEST, ROBERT R. SOUZA, GRAND PRESIDENT.

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-5

- Graduating from Novato Grammar School in June of 1947 in the Community House with the class seated on the stage. Bob Mayo was class valedictorian.

- Traveling to San Rafael High School each day on one of the two buses that transported kids from Novato.

- Playing football, baseball and basketball at S.R.H.S.

- Winning the championship for wrestling in his weight division during sophomore year, and being voted the "Outstanding Sophomore Athlete."

- Being named "Outstanding Baseball Player" in his senior year.

- The Novato baseball fields located around town. The one on 1st Street between Grant Avenue and Vallejo was used in the 1930's; there was a big one on Orange Avenue, Railroad and Olive Avenue with home plate on Orange Avenue that was used in the 1940's. Then for a year or two, we played on a field on 2nd and Vallejo. And lastly, we played on a field on the old Marion School property.

- His grandfather, Henry, worked on the Marin County roads crew and he cut the streets in Novato from 1st to 7th with a blade pulled by a team of horses.

- Getting haircuts from Pete the

Barber, who was related to his mother.

- Buying new shoes at Zunino's Shoe Store, and taking old ones there to be repaired.

- Buying clothes from Joe Foisey's Mens' Department in Pini's Store and from Fragosa's Dry Goods Store.

- Meeting his future wife, Edna Angel, in his sophomore year of high school and enjoying going to dances and movies.

- His first car was a 1935 Chevy with suicide doors and bucket seats that he bought from his aunt in 1949 for \$35.00.

- Working for Holly Tiedeman on the hay baler and making 30 to 35 cents a ton when he was eleven or twelve years old, and in high school working for Tom Hale on his ranch doing general farm work for \$8.00 a day and getting two meals.

- Most Novato kids worked in the orchards picking fruit or delivering newspapers to earn money. Many of the girls had babysitting jobs.

- His parents tried to "fatten him up" for football season by taking him to the soda fountain in the Novato Drug Store where he consumed many milkshakes.

- The Portuguese parades were held in May and started at the I.D.E.S.I. Hall and ended at Our Lady of Loretto Church. After Mass, everyone went back to the hall for a meal. The Western Weekend parades were always well attended.

- Novato kids played lots of baseball and roller skated on the sidewalks for fun. There were lots of places to fish and hunt. If you wanted to go to the movies, you had to go to San Rafael of Petaluma. After 1947, you could go to the Novato Theater.

- His family bought groceries from Rayburns and meat from Simmons Meat Market. You could buy almost anything from H. Pini and

Co., which was a general store selling everything from clothing to groceries. He bought his b.b.'s from Carlisle's Hardware Store.

- The family bought gas from the Richfield station on Grant and 101, from Charlie Peterson's garage on the 101, and at the Crossroads on 101 and Atherton.

- When he was young, everything the family needed was in the three block area on Grant Avenue from Railroad Avenue to what is now Redwood Boulevard.

- You would meet everyone you knew on Grant Avenue.

- The day he bought an 8" apricot pie at Torassa's Bakery for 35 cents, and a quart of orange soda for 5 cents and eating it all in one sitting.

- When the 1945 Pini fire happened, everyone in town came to watch from the school grounds across Grant Avenue. I remember kids taking all the shoes out of Zunino's Shoe Store and putting them across the street. The fire was fought with two fire trucks and many volunteer firefighters.

- Every year as soon as school was out for the summer, it seemed as if every hill in Novato went up in flames. The hill between Atherton and Cherry Street was always a big fire and it burned every year.

- Bruno Schultz was the town watchman. He delivered mail up and down Grant Avenue and the kids loved to annoy him.

- His grandfather had an "outhouse" on his property on Grant Avenue and 5th Street. He smoked in the outhouse, because he wasn't allowed to smoke inside the house. The house had a basement where he stored barrels of wine from grapes he grew on the property. He used to shoot birds from the porch with a double barreled shot gun. They were used for stew. He cooked some of his meals in the basement like many Italians did.

Continued on Page N-11



Board Highlights

Continued from Page N-6

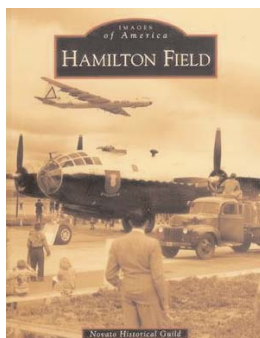
Managers of a program called “Way to Go!” have contacted the curator. This program will promote biking, walking, and public transportation in Marin County. Project managers are developing walking maps and they would like to sponsor some historic walking tours in Novato this summer. Anyone interested in leading a tour should contact Samantha Kimpel.

Old Business – The City of Novato accepted the Guild’s offer to pay \$3,000 per month for the next 12 months towards Samantha Kimpel’s salary. The agreement needs to be written and signed.

Museum Gift Shop – 260 Hamilton Field books have been sold so far at the gift shop. We received our first royalty check from Arcadia Publishing in the amount of \$751.90. So far, our profit for the book is \$2,187.52.

Hamilton Field History Book

This book was published in September of 2008 and so far 1,500 copies have been sold. You can still purchase this 128-page



softcover pictorial history book at the Novato History Museum for \$21. Other local retailers that sell our book are: Randall Brothers Automotive, Zunino Shoe Repair, and Pini Hardware.

Welcome New Guild Members

February 1, 2009 thru April 30, 2009

Individual Memberships:

Ramona E. Chipman
Robert Dries
Duane J. Graf, Sr.
Roger Lane
Anne Russell

Family Memberships:

Carol & Richard Aregger
Romona & Larry Curtis
Lois & Paul Gokel
Mary & John Grillo
Bette & Milton Holloway
Grace & Mark Koch
Pat & Mario Minolli
Carolyn & Jim Mulford
Shirley & James Nye
Peg & Lee Pogetto
Maria & Edmundo Ramos

Please support our

Guild business members:

Acme Digital and Screen Graphics
Bank of Marin
Heirloom Storage (House of Daniels, Inc.)
Marin Landscape Materials
McIsaac Dairy
Novato Horsemen
Now and Then Antiques
Pini Hardware
Suburban Alternatives Land Trust
The Wright Salon
Zenith Instant Printing

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

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

Staff Desk

Continued from Page N-5

excellent additions to our Museum volunteer corps.

Sheryl Jones is an American studies major at UC-Berkeley, and she possesses “interest and experience with documenting local histories through writing, photography, and other art forms.”

A history major at SFSU, *Philip Lehman-Brown* is interested in “learning about how a museum operates” and more about Novato history.

Nancy Peters-Janover worked in human resources management and for the US Air Force, and wrote that she “volunteers now and understands the joy it brings.” Nancy is particularly interested in documenting at the Hamilton Museum.

As an employee of Atherton Wealth Management located in the Atherton house, *Anne Russell* has

enjoyed researching John Atherton and the history of his home. Ann recently began shadowing the 3rd grade docents and will lead her own tour soon!

Mary Wilkinson, wife of 3rd grade docent *Bob Wilkinson*, wrote that she “enjoys the history of Novato,” and is another of our newest 3rd grade tour docents. Mary is also interested in working in the Museum archives.

Announcing the Exhibits Committee

Beginning in June, a newly-formed exhibits committee will meet. If you have interest in working on the content and installation of exhibits at the Hamilton Museum or the Novato History Museum, please call me at 415-897-4320 or email me at skimpel@ci.novato.ca.us.

Novato School District's 1959 Graduating Class

By Bette Benaski Holloway

Our family was living in civilian housing at Meadow Park on Hamilton Air Force Base in September 1950, so I started kindergarten at the base. I only spent a brief time in school there because in December 1950 we moved to Peach Street in Novato. My sister, Marilyn, was 3 1/2 and Dad took the two of us shopping for a Christmas tree. There wasn't much of a selection left; we ended up with a Charlie Brown one-sided tree which we thought looked gorgeous standing in the big picture window of our new home.

After Christmas vacation, I shyly and timidly started at Novato Grammar School. The stairs seemed long, steep and intimidating after the flat terrain and long barracks style classroom at Hamilton. Mrs. Walters was my teacher and she magically integrated me into the class. Some of my classmates from this kindergarten graduated with me from Novato High

School and we still keep in touch. My memories from this class are: learning the alphabet (no TV, no Sesame Street), graham crackers and milk at snack time and naps which none of us seemed to like.

Mrs. Olson was my first grade teacher, and she introduced us to the magic of reading. This was also the year we started our savings accounts at First National Bank; deposits of pennies were more common than quarters. We continued to make these weekly deposits until sixth grade. I remember the earthquake drills at Grant. Bells would sound and we would march down the steps of the school, cross the street, and go sit in the seats at the Novato Theater. It seemed more fun than serious to first graders.

Our class started second grade at Novato Grammar School, but early in the school year we, and our teacher, Mrs. Diefendorf, moved to the newly

completed Olive School, which is still the only school on the east side of Novato. Marilyn and I, our neighbors Sandy and Linda Thomas, Sharon and Susie Dowdakin, Diane and Drake Yim felt really lucky; we were only a minute from the gates to the school. There were no bus rides for us until we started seventh grade.

The new school was wonderful. Lots of natural light in the classrooms, a multipurpose room/cafeteria, wide corridors, lots of trees and grass and a huge playground. We played kickball, baseball, tetherball and dodgeball. There was room for all kinds of games and activities. In the fall for Halloween we would all parade around the playground in our costumes (most of which were homemade and sewn by our mothers). One year I was a black cat and my long tail was stepped on a lot as we made our way around the playground. For many of us the scariest part of the new school was our principal, Miss Lulu Sutton. She was a firm disciplinarian. During the summer months we used the school a lot; we played in the playground and skated up and down the corridors and ate picnic lunches in the apricot orchard beyond the school grounds.

Between second and third grades Barbara Skinner, Sandy and Linda Thomas, and Marilyn and I started dance lessons at Wanda's Dance Studio. Our costumes were made by our moms and our bi-annual recitals were held at Marion School which had a stage unlike Olive School. Dance class was fun and we met kids from all over town.

Early in the summer my parents bought our first TV, black and white, of course, from Sue Binford's dad, at Woody's TV and Appliance. Marilyn and I were so excited. Our elation was short lived; the Republican and Democratic conventions pre-empted everything we wanted to watch for a

Novato's Treasures IDESI HALL



Located at 901 Sweetser Avenue, the building on the left was built in 1908 for Portuguese dancing and banquets. The building on the right was built in 1937 for American dancing. Both halls are still used often.

Continued on Page N-10

Class of 1959

Continued from Page N-9

couple of weeks which seemed like an eternity at our age.

In third, fourth, and fifth grades I was taught by three wonderful teachers: Miss Dalessi, Miss Baird and Mrs. Steele. We were learning about geography, fractions, the California Missions and U.S. History.

Away from school, dancing lessons were still taking up quite a bit of time and Brownies was becoming boring. Girl Scouts didn't really intrigue me, so my parents suggested I join a 4-H Club. I became a Novato Aggie and we held our monthly meetings at Hill School where our class would graduate from eighth grade. 4-H would open up many new avenues

of activity for me: the Sonoma-Marin Fair, Sonoma County Fair, and 4-H camp. I made so many friends in this organization; some younger and many older: the Baccaglios, the Marzells, the McNerns, the Azevedos, the Keenas, the Staffords, the Youngs, the Baldwins, the McIsaacs, the Ruzicks, the Parrs, the Lears, the Silvas, and Norman (Johnson) Manzer. I served on many committees and held numerous offices in our club and remained an active member of the Aggies until I started college.

In sixth grade, our class was taught by Mr. Slepnikoff, my first male teacher. He helped prepare us for junior high through his teaching style, as

well as the fact that he was a male teacher, something we would encounter at the secondary level. He was supportive, not nurturing. He taught me to love reading and we learned about healthy competition through reading contests he initiated.

The class of 1959 spent seventh grade at Marion and eighth grade at Hill. Junior high was a big change from elementary school. Classes with students from other Novato schools, a home room teacher, and moving from class to class for different subjects. In seventh grade I finally learned and stopped guessing about parts of speech. I must have diagrammed at least a million sentences with Mr. Orth, my home room teacher. Now, I'm thankful to him for teaching me this necessary skill; but I wasn't so appreciative then.

When our class moved from Marion to Hill School our principal was Robert A. Patterson. The Patterson family and the Benaski family had known each other at Meadow Park and had remained close. It was difficult for me to call him Mr. Patterson, when all my life he had been Bob. I knew I would have lots of explaining to do should I ever land in his office. It must have been difficult for his son, Mike. I never did ask him about this however.

The class of 1959 grew up as Novato was growing, growing, growing. Novato wasn't a city yet and our schools were gathering places for activities outside the classroom, like Little League, dance recitals and 4-H. We played on the schoolgrounds with little supervision or structure from our parents; but we all knew to be home by a certain time.

I have lived in Sonoma for over thirty years now, and come to Novato often. Interestingly, the city is still small enough to run into someone you know each time you visit; so it's still a special place for those of us who can no longer call it home.

Guild Volunteers at Work

Anna Morrison, Marie Salmina and Ann Ramsay work every Thursday at the museum from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They record and file local obituary notices, news articles about Novato events and people and new accessions. Anna Morrison has been a member of the Guild since 1983. She was on the Board of Directors and currently chairs the Sunshine Committee. Marie Salmina has been a member of the Guild since 1984. She helps with the guest book

at the General Meetings and she is also a Wednesday Docent. Ann Ramsay joined the Guild in 1993. She was on the Board of Directors and currently helps with the guest book at the General Meetings. These ladies volunteered a total of 662 hours in 2008. It is dedicated volunteers, like these ladies, who make it possible to have a History Museum so that visitors may get a glimpse into Novato's past.



Anna Morrison, Marie Salmina and Ann Ramsay at work in the museum.

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-7

- Getting milk from the Pinheiro dairy in gallon containers right out of the milk tank.
- The many chicken ranches all over Novato.
- Working for 28 years for Aaero Heating in Novato installing heating and air conditioning units in down-

town commercial buildings and private residences.

- Old Novato families with the names: Gness, Leveroni, Lafranchi, Almeida, Brazil, Valim, Pinheiro, Bormolini, Silva, Baccaglio, Weseman, Nye, Wise, and Marzell.
- The biggest changes in Novato

have been the traffic and congestion, and you can walk the streets and never see anyone you know. We've gone from never locking your house and car to now needing an alarm system. The good changes are the improvement of the streets and modern fire fighting equipment.

THE GIFT SHOPPE

The Museum Gift Shoppe has the perfect unique Novato gift!

Books & Pamphlets

- *Novato Township** the definitive history of Novato by May Ungemach \$30.50
- Hamilton Field by Novato Historical Guild \$21.00
- Hamilton Airfield History \$2.00

Videos & DVD's

- Hamilton Field History (VHS) \$15.00
- Novato History (VHS) \$10.00
- Novato History (DVD) \$10.00 (available only through the museum)

Sweatshirts (S, M, L, & XL) \$20.00

- Novato History Museum (blue or green)

Ornaments

- Novato History Museum \$7.00
- Hamilton History Museum \$10.00
- Novato City Hall \$10.00

T-Shirts (M, L, & XL) \$11.00

- Guild Historic Buildings (3 designs): *Postmaster's House, City Hall/Church, Railroad Depot*

Miscellaneous

- Novato Historic Buildings Notecard Sets \$10.00
- Guild Tote Bags \$5.00
- Ceramic Thimble \$1.00
- Novato History Collector Cards . . . \$3 per pack or 30¢ each
- Hamilton Field Historic Picture Reproductions \$10.00
- Mugs \$5.00
- Laminated Place Mat (11 x 14) \$5.00 (available only at the museum)

Leather Goods

- Coin Purse \$15.00
- Business Card Holder \$12.50
- Small Purse \$23.00

We accept VISA or MASTERCARD

* All proceeds from the sale of *Novato Township* go directly to the support of the History Museum.

All prices include sales tax. To Order: Call the museum at 897-4320 or email patjohnstn@aol.com for shipping charges and information. Supporting and Life Members receive a 10% discount at the Gift Shoppe!

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

- | | | |
|---|---------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (full time) membership | \$5 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership | \$15 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership | \$25 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron membership | \$100 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting membership | \$200 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint | \$500 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1,000 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership | \$50 | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate membership | \$1,000 | year |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Additional donations? _____

Interested in volunteering? _____

**“Old Timers’ Day” and
General Membership Meeting**
of the
Novato Historical Guild
Saturday, June 6, 2009 — noon
Margaret Todd Senior Center
1560 Hill Road, Novato

The program will feature a 50th Anniversary Celebration of the
1959 Eighth Grade Graduating Class of Hill School

NOVATO HISTORY MUSEUM

COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND! • 815 DeLong Avenue

The Museum is open 3 days a week—Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday—Noon to 4 p.m. • 897-4320

Closed Major Holidays



NOVATO HISTORICAL GUILD
75 Rowland Way, Suite 200
Novato, CA 94945

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Time Value

