



## Old Timers' Day Hosts 1959 Grads



*Back Row: Rene Borloz, Dave Thompson, Don Pedrazzini, Mike Patterson, Ron Heidinger, David Paul, Jim Dennett. 2nd Row: Lynn Blennerhasset, Rick Whitney, Chris Robinette, Pat Silva, Donna Fippin, Pat Browder, Andrina Walsh. 1st Row: Dee Vela, Bette Holloway, Sue Morgan.*

Eighteen members of the 1959 Hill School 8th grade graduating class were honored guests of the Novato Historical Guild's Old Timers' Day on June 6th. The event was held at the Margaret Todd Senior Center on Hill Road.

President Ron Vela introduced class members and asked them to share their memories of growing up in small town Novato 50 years ago.

The Guild provided an excellent buffet lunch for those attending this annual popular event.

## Guild Volunteers Hard at Work

Once a month, Diana Goebel and Edna Manzoni search through the museum files and select pictures that tell the story of Novato's history. Then they write a caption to go with each of the historical photos. These "Novato Memories" appear weekly in the Novato Advance.

Diana joined the Guild in 1998. She is a 3rd Grade Docent, chairs the Hospitality Committee, is a Wednesday Docent and she is on the Board of Directors. Edna has been a member of the Guild since 1990. She chairs the Membership Committee, assists Diana with hospitality, is a 3rd Grade Docent and she is on the Board of Directors. Diana and Edna recorded a total of 450 hours in 2008; that does not include all of the volunteer hours they forgot to record. The Guild appreciates your gift of time and your special skills that help keep Novato's history alive.



*Fourth of July Parade 2009 - The theme this year is "Going Green." Mike Silva is driving the truck and Janice Bazurto and Susan Trumbull are washing and hanging old-fashioned clothes on a clothesline.*



*Diana Goebel and Edna Mazoni at work in the museum.*

## 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 2009 Officers

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Kathy Graves

### Museum Curator

Samantha Kimpel

Original articles and photographs related to Novato history are welcomed!

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

### Address Changes

The Novato Historian is mailed by bulk mail and will **not** be forwarded by the Postal Service. Please notify us promptly of your address change, at Novato Historical Guild, 75 Rowland Way, Suite 200, Novato, CA 94945.



## President's Corner

by Ron Vela

President, Novato Historical Guild

The 4th of July parade was a great success and our parade float was terrific. Thanks to all the volunteers who put it together. You all did a great job. We didn't win any awards (personally I thought our float was the best), but we had a good time and look forward to next year.

With the museum coming on-line early next year the Guild needs to think of ways to raise funds. The cost of exhibit cases, panels, lighting, audio/visual are a substantial cost. The first project we have decided to do is to create an area seven feet by fifty feet that will be adjacent to the entry way into the museum. The area will be viewed by anyone who enters the museum. In this area the Guild will sell engraved pavers to those who would like to support the museum and be a permanent part of its history. Along the backside of where the pavers are laid we will construct a wall that will be used as a military memorial. The wall will be covered in tiles with the names of loved ones who have passed away that have served in the military and especially at Hamilton. The final design of the area needs to be completed as we are still in the planning process. The prices for the pavers and the memorial tiles have not been determined. We will be providing the details to you as soon as we can. For now you may want to think about if you would like to have your own family paver or a

memorial tile or both. We would really appreciate your support.

Be sure and put on your calendar the next general meeting September 12. The meeting will be held at the Hamilton Museum. We are excited about showing off all the hard work that has been done. Ray Dwelly and crew are just about done with the interior of the museum. Next steps are all the exhibit cases, panels and creating the exhibits.

As all of you know, the Historical Guild is an all volunteer organization and without the volunteers the museum and the Guild would not exist. I cannot thank them enough for all the time they donate. The first quarter of this year we had forty-four volunteers with a combined total of 692 hours. There were forty-one volunteers in the second quarter with a combined total of 794 hours. These forty plus volunteers are the same dedicated people who serve month after month. Once we open the Hamilton museum we will need even more volunteers to be docents at Hamilton. We ask if you are so inclined and looking for a rewarding volunteer opportunity please let us know. Once again thank you.

Finally I wanted to extend our condolences to the family and friends of Eva Slott who passed away June 10, 2009. For at least the past five years, Eva volunteered weekly at the museum to help manage the archives, library, and collections. We will miss her dearly.

*Congratulations  
and  
Happy 50th Anniversary  
to  
Bill and Pat Wright*







# Novato—50 Years Ago

## (July, August and September 1959)

by Bill Almeida and Tonie Brown

*"Novato 50 Years Ago" is a collection of items culled by Bill Almeida from the July, August and September issues of the Novato Advance newspapers in the collection of the Novato History Museum and 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 and Mary Pedranzini of Santa Rosa, have asked, through attorney Julius Selinger, that Marin County Board of Supervisors cancel back taxes on the old Grant Avenue school property for the years 1955, 1956 and 1957. The Pedranzinis own the property. They argue the property was wrongfully assessed for those years because the title was still held by the Novato School District, which is tax exempt. The taxes are \$23,941.

▪ Delays keep harassing John Novak's Millwood Terrace subdivision on Wilson Avenue. Purchasers, promised they could move in July 1, now are anticipating one to three months wait before they can move in.

▪ On July 16, trustees of the San Jose School District decided on the boundaries for a new school site for seventh and eighth graders. Supt. Phillip Schneider was instructed to purchase property at the intersection of the extensions of San Jose Boulevard and Sunset Parkway.

▪ A former Novato girl went to Russia with Vice President Nixon. She was Marguerite Higgins, famed war correspondent who lived in Novato for several months and married Hamilton Field General William Hall. She was one of 57 reporters who accompanied Nixon.

▪ The Lu Sutton School, on Center Road, was nearing completion at the end of July. The new 12 classroom school, a \$304,818 project, was

expected to end double sessions in the fall in the Novato School District until such time as growth caught up again.

▪ Nancy Phinney became the bride of Alfred John Cazzaniga on July 26 at Our Lady of Loretto Church. The groom had just returned from a naval tour of duty at Midway Island and Nancy had graduated from Novato High School in June.

▪ Earth moving equipment of Fabian Bobo was busy most of July reducing the hill on which the Grant Avenue School stood to a flat expanse of ground where commercial buildings can be built. Some of the dirt was used for fill for Kaehler's apartments off Olive Avenue.

▪ Marlin Olsen arrived in Novato in August to take over as Varsity football coach of Novato High School, succeeding Coach Bill Wood who is departing for Santa Cruz. In addition to coaching, Olsen will teach P.E. a half day and then he will counsel the rest of the time.

▪ Patricia Lee Minahen and William W. Wright were married August 21 at St. Rafael's Church in San Rafael. Kathleen Minahen was maid of honor for her sister while Foster "Frosty" Wright was best man. Bride and groom are graduates of San Rafael High School and both attended College of Marin.

▪ Paul Kaemmer, 10, was bitten by a snake as he played in a yard at 10 Plaza de Mira. The snake, though resembling a rattler in marking, proved to be a harmless gopher snake. The snake had crawled in the lad's pants leg and bit him as he reached down to brush him off. He was treated by a doctor.

▪ Sandra Lee Lazzari, 16, of Novato was chosen Maid of Marin during the Western Weekend celebra-

tion in June where she was Queen. She was a senior at Novato High School, and her figure taped a shape-ly 36-24-36.

▪ Jack Sparrow and Ron Snidow were standouts in the Annual East-West high school football classic in Kezar Stadium on August 27. Sparrow, Novato High star, handled almost all of the quarterbacking chores, while Snidow, San Rafael High end, was primarily responsible for bottling up the East offensive game. The West team won 19-0.

▪ Novato's pioneer lumber yard, started towards the turn of the century by former county supervisor Robert Trumbull, was sold on September 2 to a Napa lumber yard chain. Henry Hess Company was purchased by Bailey Lumber, but all present employees will remain. Employees include present manager for the past 30 years, Egidio Baccaglio; Walt Simonds, 18 years; Frank Hildebrand, 13 years; Plinio Butti for 8 years; and Fritz Moellendorf for the past 4 years.

▪ Richard Lieb was married September 12 to Miss Blanche Evans of Petaluma. The wedding took place at St. John's Episcopal Church in Petaluma. He is a graduate of San Rafael High School and a long-time resident of Novato. The bride is a graduate of Petaluma High School and has worked as a dental nurse for several years.

▪ Bonds worth \$141,000 of the Novato Unified School District were sold September 8 when a rate of 4 1/4 percent was offered by the Bank of America. Sale of the bonds allowed the school district to go ahead with its purchase of the Connell property on a South Novato Boulevard site for a new elementary school. Note: Rancho School.

*Continued on page N-6*

# Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

## May 2009

*Curator's Report* – The *Novato, Then and Now* book is due to the publisher next Tuesday. Novato's birthday celebration is a good time to use the theme, "Novato, Then and Now" by displaying many of the photographs used in the book. The NHG is getting two file cabinets of photos from the Novato Advance

*Old Business* – Kathy Graves said that the City Council wants to thank the Novato Historical Guild for the financial support pledged next fiscal year. A proclamation will be awarded

to NHG June 9 at the City Council meeting; Ron Vela will represent NHG at the meeting.

*Hamilton Museum*—1,342 volunteer hours were recorded for the project to date. Colors for the interior have been chosen – samples were shown (pale to dark-gold and tan tones).

## June 2009

*New Business* – The city will discuss rezoning 900, 908, and 917 Sherman Avenue on June 15. Roland Fuetie will attend the meeting.

The Guild will have to file form 990 this calendar year because the income will be over \$20,000.

*Curator's Report* – The *Novato, Then and Now* book is due to be

released on October 12. The Hamilton Library would like to dedicate a permanent display space for the Hamilton Museum.

*Old Business* – The theme for the 4th of July Parade is "Going Green." John Trumbull came up with a great idea – cover a flat bed truck with grass, have members dressed in period clothing washing clothes in a tub and hanging the old clothes on a clothesline. There will also be a 6-ft. windmill and a cow on the float.

Fund raising idea for the Hamilton Museum: Sell concrete pavers, which come in various sizes and colors. The cost is \$17.50 per 100. A meeting was scheduled to explore the areas to be paved at the Hamilton Museum. It was suggested that the Guild have a policy on what wording is acceptable or not acceptable.

*Hamilton Museum* – Pini Hardware donated 15 gallons of paint so far. The last inspection before the final inspection was today. Ray Dwelly said his goal is for the museum to be open in September. There were 1,746 volunteer hours recorded for the project to date.

## July 2009

*Curator's Report* – Mark Lomas has created a Marin History blog. He will put some pictures from the *Novato, Then and Now* book on the blog. The outdoor bench for 3rd Grade Tours was installed by the City. The cost of the bench was covered by memorial donations and by Jim and Joe McNern and friends, in honor of Margaret McNern.

*Old Business* – NHG float did not win an award this year, but it was one of the few floats that stuck to the theme "Going Green."

*Hamilton Museum* – The interior painting is almost completed and carpeting is scheduled for August 27. Telephone and internet service has not been installed yet. Kathy Graves will check with the City. The Board approved a \$7,000 budget for audio visual equipment for the Hamilton Museum.

## In Memoriam

The Guild mourns the loss of the following members:

Barbara Gnos  
Bob Guerra  
Ida Kohl  
Janet Melson  
Betty Regalia  
Eva Slott  
Dr. James Studley

## The Guild

### Extends Sympathy to

**George Gnos** on the death of his wife, Barbara.

**Elizabeth Gnos** on the death of her daughter-in-law, Barbara.

**The family** of Bob Guerra.

**Barbara Allen** on the death of her mother, Ida Kohl.

**Bill Melson** on the death of his wife, Janet.

**Pat and Dan Johnstone** on the death of her mother, Betty Barnes.

**Ross and Adair Rogers** on the death of his sister, Betty Regalia.

**Emily Regalia and Carmelann Raab** on the death of their mother, Betty Regalia.

**Iva Young** on the death of her housemate, Betty Grimes.

**Carmilla Studley** on the death of her husband, James.

**Martin Beebe** on the death of his brother, Donald.

## 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.

## Novato Memories

By Jim McNern



*Karen Dunlap Millikin*

*Karen Dunlap Millikin was born at home on the Dunlap Ranch on Mill Road. She was a member of the 1937 graduating class from Novato Grammar School. Karen shares her Novato memories in this September issue of the Novato Historian. Karen remembers:*

- Growing up on the Dunlap chicken ranch at 2041 Mill Road with her father John W., her mother Henrietta Thygesen Dunlap and her siblings Sarah, Rosalie and Johnny Dunlap.

- Her dad having a sheet metal shop on Grant Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets across from the old Pini Hardware Building.

- The Dunlap ranch had 5,000 laying hens and shipped the eggs to the Poultry Producers in Petaluma. Many of the chicks were hatched in incubators on the ranch.

- Her neighbors: Mr. Magetti, E.R. McDonald, Art Buehn, and Mrs. Lambert on Hatch Road.

- Attending Novato Grammar School and having Edna Butler, Miss Cooper, Miss Clark, Mrs. Steele and Miss Sutton as her teachers.

- Taking baths when they were little kids in a big tub in the kitchen her dad had made in his sheet metal shop.



## From the Staff Desk

by Samantha Kimpel  
Museum Curator

### Crafting a Scavenger Hunt

We have so many exciting things to work on this year. Between the imminent opening of the Hamilton Field History Museum, the publishing of our second Arcadia title, *Novato, Then & Now*, due out this fall, and the celebration of Novato's 50th birthday, we certainly have many opportunities to share and celebrate local history.

Two of our docents, Edna Manzoni and Jim McNern, talked to me recently about developing a Novato history scavenger hunt. They suggested we identify a number of historical landmarks, architectural features, and/or interesting sites around town, and then create a scavenger hunt-type tour. I think it would be a wonderful and fun way for families and groups of friends to learn more about the town.

The water had to be heated on the stove.

- Her classmates and friends: Mary Binford, Margaret Johnson, Phyllis Turnbull, Dorothy Burke, Virginia Probasco, Norma Kilpatrick, Annie Louie, Annabelle Cantua, Lee Dias, Flora and Celia Pivato, Lorraine Koelsch, Edna and Al Bunt, Bud Steele, Bob Busher, Roger Lane, Paul Thompson, Robert Westlund, and Marge Corda from Burdell School.

- The boys around town hauling outhouses and junk into town and putting them on top of Pini's Store and on Grant Avenue every Halloween.

- Getting their Christmas tree from one of the hills in town and decorating it with homemade ornaments.

- Having a big, fancy valentine's box in class where valentine cards were placed to be distributed to classmates.

We will be developing this scavenger hunt this fall. The basic idea is that we will provide either a list of "Then" photos and participants will have to identify the "Now" site, or we provide a list of clues that leads them to various sites around town. Once they find them, they must photograph themselves or their team at the site to prove that they were there. People who successfully complete the scavenger hunt will win prizes.

If you have some ideas of sites or unique community features to include (even if they are difficult to find, we can provide levels of clues), I would love to hear from you. Have a good fall, and watch for announcements for the publishing of *Novato, Then & Now*!

- The May Day celebration at school when children would dance around the May pole and then have a play day with children who came from the surrounding rural schools. It was a well-organized annual event.

- On Saturdays Karen and her sister, Sarah, cleaned house and did all the laundry before they could go out and play.

- Everyone knew Miss Sutton was a strict disciplinarian, so there was no "fooling around" in her class. She would have students come up to the blackboard and work out math problems as she watched. You couldn't go out to recess until you finished the problem.

- She liked all of her teachers at Novato Grammar School.

- Roller skating on Wilson Avenue

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# Novato—50 Years Ago

*Continued from page N-3*

▪ Richard Burgi and Erline Porter were married in Los Angeles September 12. A wedding reception was held September 15 in the Fairfax Masonic Hall in Larkspur for the popular Novato couple.

▪ Don Brittsan, 26, was appointed farm advisor in Marin County by the University of California Agricultural Extension Service. He was to be in charge of the 4-H Club program for Marin County. He graduated from U.C. Davis in 1956.

▪ Miss Sylvania Silva, who came to Novato from the Azores Islands in 1919, died Sept. 19 at San Rafael General Hospital. She had lived with and kept house for her brother John at 825 DeLong Avenue (Kuser house). She was a seamstress of noted ability and was known for her many charitable activities.

▪ Silver Hills Country Club at 460 Olive Avenue was accepting member-

ships on July 10. Membership was limited to 600 families.

▪ Lights were turned on for the first time at McIntosh Field on July 31. The field was located at the end of Simmons Lane. McIntosh Field was used for Pony League day games for a month before the long-awaited night softball game between the Novato Merchants and the Redwood City merchants.

▪ Bill Glass, 12 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Glass, was shot in the leg July 30 by a 14 year old boy with whom he was having an argument. The injury was not serious and the deputy sheriff took the gun which belonged to a third boy.

▪ Petaluma River is officially legal. President Eisenhower signed a bill, authored by Congressman Clem Miller, to officially rename what was once known as Petaluma Creek. Now that the bill has become law, the river

will be designated by its new name in all laws, regulations, maps, documents and other records of the United States.

▪ The last operational B-29 in the continental United States left Hamilton Air Force Base July 6. Its departure coincides with the announcement of the proposed shift of the 4754<sup>th</sup> Radar Evaluation Squadron to Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah. The B-29 is the last in the United States; the rest are moth-balled, although there are still 4 in Okinawa.

## Novato History Museum Staff and Docents Conduct Walking Tour

*This item appeared in last week's Advance, but I wanted to also send a reminder to everyone in case you missed it or know someone who'd be interested!*

NHM staff and docents worked with Walk/Bike Marin to include a free guided history walk of downtown Novato as part of a summer campaign to promote walking and biking in Novato. On Wednesday, July 15, the public is invited to congregate outside of Powell's Sweet Shoppe at 6:30-8:00 p.m. Three Novato History Museum docents will be on hand to conduct historical walking tours. The event is part of "Way to Go! Novato" which encourages residents to explore the town on foot and on bikes ([www.walkbike-marin.org/waytogo](http://www.walkbike-marin.org/waytogo)). Future events include a transit and bicycling clinic, a guided bicycle ride, and a nature walk.

Best regards,

Samantha Kimpel

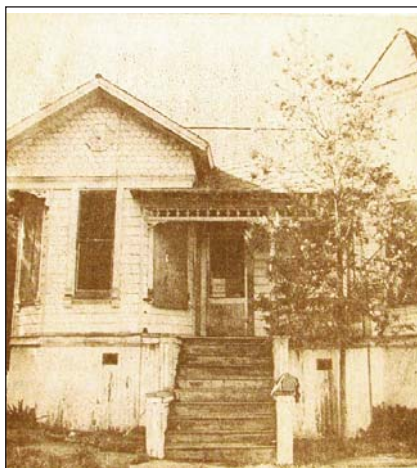
Curator, Novato History Museum

City of Novato Parks, Recreation & Community Services

Phone 415-899-8236

Fax 415-899-8219

## Novato's Treasures CARLILE HOUSE



*The Carlile House, located at the corner of DeLong and Reichert is shown on the left in 1974 in severe disrepair. On the right we see the nicely restored house. It is currently used for commercial purposes.*

# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-5*

by moonlight after it got paved.

- Everyone walked, got rides on wagons, or rode bikes to get around town. Parents didn't drive kids around.

- Graduating from the eighth grade in the Community House in June of 1937. Students from the one-room rural schools also graduated at this time. The graduating girls from the small schools wore formal gowns and carried huge bouquets of flowers.

- Catching the bus for San Rafael High School at the corner of Mill and Wilson Avenue. Mr. Turrini was the bus driver.

- Playing the violin in all the programs in high school, and also playing the bass drum in the marching band at the football games.

- Playing on a town baseball team with Peewee Renati and Babe Pronzini, and playing basketball inside the Community House.

- Picking prunes for Mr. Frisbee and getting 25 cents a lug.

- Other jobs were picking gravenstein apples, pears and plums and occasionally cleaning house for Mrs. Kellis.

- Many of the boys in town earned money working on the hay baling crews and picking fruit.

- Hiking up in the hills at the end of Wilson Avenue to play in the snow.

- The Novato Harvest Festival that was held every fall in the Community House where Novatans would exhibit their fruit and vegetables in competition for prizes.

- Attending many dances in the Community House and surrounding communities.

- Large fields of wheat were grown across from her father's sheet metal shop on Grant Avenue on the Sweetser property.

- Swimming in Papermill Creek in West Marin on hot summer days.

- Buying Greyhound bus tickets for trips out of town at the Novato Drug Store.

- All of the Novato businesses were on the east side of the 101 Highway, except for her dad's shop.

- The Dunlap family shopped at H. Pini & Co., Simmons Meat Market, Carlisle's Hardware, Meyer's Bakery, Nave's Cabbage Patch, and the little Balz store off Simmons Lane.

- Her first job after graduating from the Luther Burbank College of Commerce in Santa Rosa was working for the Marin County Draft Board in San Rafael.

- Watching the annual Portuguese parade and dancing the chamarita in the hall.

- Kitty Chaplin was the telephone operator in town. She knew where everyone lived, and their daily routines. If you wanted to find someone in town, Kitty could always tell you where they were.

- The Dunlap family's telephone number was 152.

- Being scared to death when the gypsies came to town. The kids would pull down all the shades in the house and hide under the bed.

- Roller skating to the Novato Drug Store and getting vanilla ice cream cones on Sunday.

- Traveling by train from Novato

to Sausalito, and then catching the ferry to San Francisco a couple of times a year to buy shoes and clothes.

- Smelly weasels would come to the ranch to get eggs and chickens. They would crawl under the chicken house.

- Novato had a number of skunks around town. Many people called them "civit cats." Her aunt, "Mat" McIntosh, who lived at the end of Simmons Lane had problems with them crawling through a hole in her house in search of cat food.

- Many people had "outhouses" in their yards before indoor bathrooms.

- Her Aunt May Smith working with Alberta Frankamp and Theda Bugeia at the Novato Post Office.

- Theda Bugeia was the rural mail carrier and the Dunlap's family mailbox was located on the corner of Mill Road and Wilson Avenue with a group of five or six others.

- The many chicken ranches around town belonging to the Heinecke, Anderson, Balz, Lieb, Gnos, Penhale, and Schekenbach families.

- Her mother was a seamstress and did the alterations for Joe Foisey's Mens' Department in Pini's Store.

- Henry Pini and his wife lived next to the Lafranchi family on Novato Boulevard.

- The huge grass fire of 1941 on the Gauthier property that burned many acres from Trumbull to Wilson Avenue.

- Bill Cole working in the Pini Store and later managing the feed mill.

- Bruno Schultz was the town character who was always in a hurry carrying his cane.

- Her aunt and uncle were Charles "Curly" and Amanda "Mat" McIntosh who lived at the end of Simmons Lane. Curly worked on the

*Continued on Page N-11*

## General Membership Meeting

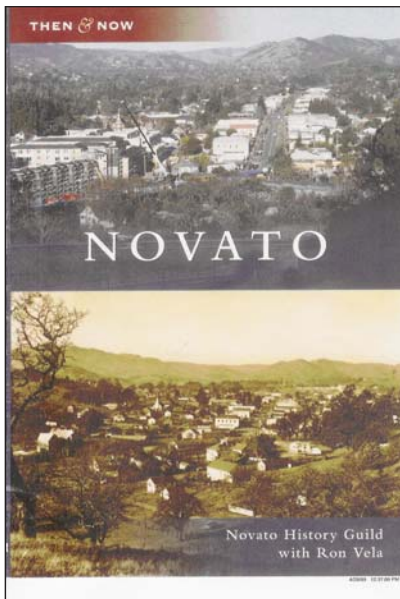
Saturday, September 12  
Hamilton Museum  
(the old fire house)

Hot dogs and hamburgers will be served from 12 noon to 2 p.m. to members and their guests. From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. the general public is invited to tour the facility.



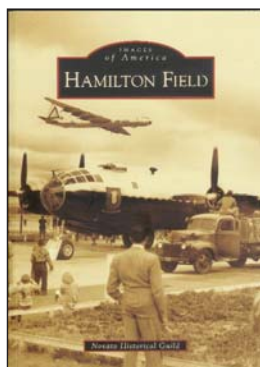
## Coming Soon To NHG Gift Shoppe

Working with the Novato Historical Guild and the archives of the Novato History Museum, photographer Ron Vela has documented this city's transition from ranch beginnings to modern suburban community. This book should be released on October 12.



## 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

September 2009

### Individual Memberships:

Sandy Tufts Hansen  
Bob Sparrow  
David Selzer

### Family Memberships:

Denise Shaheen  
Patricia and Edward Browder  
Gary McConnell

### Please support our Guild business members:

Acme Digital and Screen Graphics  
Bank of Marin  
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  
Trumbull Manor, Novato

*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.*



*Past President Jim McNern is shown installing a plaque (shown inset) on the bench he has placed at the Novato Historical Guild Museum in memory of his mother.*



# Memories of Novato High School

By Yvette Borloz Jackson

My parents lived in San Francisco with my sister, grandparents and my uncle. They often went on Sunday rides in the local area to get away from the fog (it could happen). In early summer 1940 they went north and found themselves in a small town called Novato. There was need for aspirin and there just happened to be a pharmacy right on highway 101. As the story goes they went into the Novato Pharmacy (the present day "Trophy Shop") and started to talk to some of the locals and were told that there was a piece of property for sale on McClay Road (presently Campbell Ct). They thought it would be interesting to go and look and have a picnic. They fell in love with the country and the area that had no fog and was close to San Francisco.

It wasn't long until the property and house were bought and my family moved in. In September of 1940, my mom and dad, Yvonne and Rene Borloz, and my sister Claudette and my grandparents Maurice and Christiane Deny took residence. Seven months later I made my appearance.

My young years were carefree and full of love. My grandfather commuted to San Francisco and my father went to work at Mare Island so he also commuted. My mother and grandmother took care of the house and garden. There were chickens, rabbits, cows and sheep and turkeys and all manner of fruit trees and even a small vineyard.

Our closest neighbors were the Kingsleys on one side and the DeLucchis on the other. Across the street were the Ambrosinis.

I started school in 1947. There was only one school in Novato at the time, Grant Avenue School. It went from the first grade through eighth grade. My sister had started 3 years prior to me, my brother went to school four years after me and by that time the district had added a kindergarten class.

LuLu Sutton was the principal of the school and for a rather shy girl she was pretty intimidating. I remember the graham crackers and milk and saving our dimes. There were seesaws, monkey rings and a merry-go-

round on the school yard. We played hop-scotch, tag and other games during recess. We had a May Pole dance on the first of May and walking field trips on Grant Avenue to the library located next to Torassa's Bakery (what wonderful smells emanated from that store).

I attended Grant Avenue School through the 4th grade. The school was closed and I then went to Marion Avenue School starting the 5th grade. My family had moved to Marion Avenue in 1946 so this was very convenient for us. Most of my friends belonged to the 4-H and participated in church activities so if we were in separate classes in school we continued to be close.

It became apparent that Novato needed a high school so the discussion started. The School District and a committee of citizens came together and did their research, and after some time, it was decided that a school bond was needed to complete this project. The school bond did pass and it was my class that would be the first attendees at Novato High School.



Marin County Supervisor William Gnos speaks to the first class of Novato High School on opening day in 1955. Photo was taken in the multi-purpose room at Marion School.

A parcel of land on the southwest side of South Novato Boulevard was purchased from the Brazil family and the construction commenced in April 1956 by the BNR Construction Co. Since the building was not ready for us to occupy when our freshman year started in September of 1955, so we attended school at Marion Avenue School in split session days. Our days started late mornings and ended in the late afternoons.

Continued on Page N-10

## Novato High School

*Continued from Page N-9*

There were no upper classmen because anyone who was going to high school before 1955 went to San Rafael High or one of the other high schools in the area.

At the start of our sophomore year the new school was still not completed, so again we went to class at Marion School. We had chosen our school colors and mascot in our 8th grade year. (We had a contest and a vote, and black and gold and Hornets were chosen.) We had football, basketball and baseball teams competing in the regional league. We struggled for the first year, but we had such school spirit with cheerleaders and pom-pom girls leading the way, that it wasn't long that we became a force to be reckoned with.

The staff in those years was dedicated educators and leaders, often wearing more than one hat. They were wholly instrumental in the formation of a cohesive and enthusiastic group of students.

The move to the "new" high school happened after the Christmas break in early 1957.

The sophomore and freshman classes, teachers, and staff came to a school with few classrooms, a gym, other essential buildings and a parking lot. I remember the mud in the rainy season and the dust when dry. The student body was approximately 200 students for both classes. There wasn't a time when construction was not being done to expand the campus. More classrooms, gyms, sport fields and shop buildings were just some of what was added as the school went from two classes to four. There were no homes on Arthur Street or the surrounding area when we first occupied the campus, but it wasn't long before they sprang up. During those early

## A Bit of History On the Carlile House

Charles Carlile bought the house on 853 Reichert Ave (c1902). It had

two bedrooms, living and dining rooms, kitchen w/pantry and utility washroom with zink-lined bathtub. A wood shed with out-house and a picket fence completed the new home.

A water tank with wind-mill, just south-west and up the hill behind this



years the town of Novato supported the efforts of the students and staff. They were enthusiastic about the sports events, especially football

The student body would have fund raising drives to help buy or build items that were not covered in the bond. Everyone participated in these efforts, not just the students and staff but the citizens of Novato, parents, merchants and civic leaders. It pulled the citizens of Novato together in common effort which had not been there before the high school was built.

The students excelled in both athletics and academics and the valuable lesson of volunteerism was learned. Today the alumni of that first graduating class are educators, judges, attorneys, hospital administrators, engineers, law enforcers, nurses, boat builders, etc.

It is now 50 years since we graduated and the students of that first graduating class are so proud. I know that others are proud of their classes, but we were unique because of the situation we were in. We built, with the help of many, a fine learning institution for all those that have come through those doors since and those who are to come.

**GO HORNETS!!!**

and the duplicate house, supplied both houses with water. Dr. Kuser

rented the duplicate house until his home and office were built just opposite the Presbyterian Church in about 1908.

Mr. Carlile continued to live in the house

until his death in July 1961. The house was willed to the two children, but they did not live in it. Instead, they put it up for sale and a company bought it to put condominium dwellings on the site. However, the city and state had plans to widen DeLong Avenue, making it the main entrance to the city from the freeway. That killed those plans and the house was rented and badly damaged by a succession of tenants.

It was sold later to Jack W. Vidano who had wanted to put up an office building on the site. Meanwhile, he attempted to rent it, but could not because the house was not up to the code. The City of Novato bought the house for \$33,200 in 1971 as part of the proposed civic center.

The city offered the Carlile house to the Novato Chamber of Commerce to use as an office with a stipulation that the chamber repair it. Landmark Associates Paul Frank and Bill Kelly leased it from the city in 1974 and began restoring it. Frank, a developer, and Kelly, an architect, had their offices there along with the Chamber of Commerce.





# Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-7

county road crews. The county yard was on the McIntosh property.

- Her aunt "Mat" belonged to the Ladies Auxillary of the fire department and would help make tons of sandwiches and prepare food for the firefighters fighting Novato grass fires.

- Being President of the Novato

Historical Guild in 1993 and 1994.

- Old Novato families with the names: Sutton, Louie, Baccaglio, Paladini, Bormolini, Wise, Lieb, Johnson, Gnoss, Balz, Brown, Penhale, Washburn, Torassa, Steele, Tracy, Collier, Gauthier, McDonald, and Frisbee.

- The many changes in town over the years: the city growing too fast for the streets; the increased population; more crime; and the difficulty of getting people to participate in community organizations. One good change is that there are many more restaurants and a great variety of food choices.

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