

The Novato Historian

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

Preserving Novato's History
News Section

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April-June 2012

The Novato Historian

Volume 36, Number 2

Third Graders Learn Novato's History

This has been a record year for the Spring third grade tours of the Novato History Museum. Thirty classes from all eight Novato elementary schools have par-



Docent Laurie Gratiot

ticipated in the program. It involved two parts: the downtown tour of Old Town and the tour of the museum. The tours were led by museum docents who explained the history of the postmaster's house and its

architecture. In the downtown tour the students heard about the historic buildings. While at the museum they learned how Novato developed from the land grant of Rancho de Novato to the large orchards of DeLong and Sweetser to the



Docent Laurie O'Mara

land being turned into dairies, chicken ranches, and then development of homes.

Teachers' comments about this program were very positive. Third graders were

interested in what they were learning. Ringing the school bell and seeing the artifacts in Grandma's Trunk has always been a big hit with them.

We appreciate all the third grade docents who led the tours this year. They are invaluable to our program. Thank you to the following docents for the great job they did: Janice Bazaruto, Mary Bicknell,



Docent Bob Wilkinson

Celinda Current, Don Edwards, Jennifer Goldfinger, Laurie Gratiot, Jennifer Guenther, Bobbie Kettler, Anne Lehan, Lauren Long, Edna Manzoni, Jim McNern, Cindy Motsinger, Laurie O'Mara, Anne Russell, Susan Trumbull, and Bob Wilkinson.

We welcome and need more docents. If you are interested in being a third grade docent, please contact Janice Bazaruto at JNBazaruto@sbcglobal.net

Novato Historical Guild June 16 Meeting

On Saturday, June 16, at the City Hall on Sherman Avenue, the Guild will have its 22nd annual "Old Timers' Day." Because of the size of the 8th grade class in 1962, we will not be doing the class reunion of the 8th grade class. We will be going back to what "Old Timers' Day" was back in 1990, which was "show and tell." Dig out your favorite family photo or an item you believe is historically interesting and bring it for all to enjoy.

There will be videos of the old days and newspaper pictures from the 1950's to 1970's. Also, our guest speaker will be **Wayne Womack**, Novato's first mayor.

The June 16 meeting starts at 1 p.m. There will be refreshments provided by Guild volunteers. Come and bring a friend!!



Lissa McKee was the guest speaker at the March General Meeting. Here she is pointing out different Portuguese dairy ranchers in Southern Marin.

CORRECTION:

Page 8 of the March newsletter. The Pini fire was in 1945, not 1955. Actual date of the fire was April 19, 1945.

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 © 2012 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.

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Museum Curator

Samantha Kimpel

Original articles and photographs related to Novato history are welcomed!

Deadline for the Sept. issue is August 1

Address Changes

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



President's Corner

by Michael Read

President, Novato Historical Guild

Great News! The Hamilton Field History Museum has received the Hap Arnold exhibit and by this time the display should be ready for viewing. I want to thank Ray Dwelly for securing the display and also getting the insurance for this very special exhibit. Henry Harley "Hap" Arnold (June 25, 1886 – January 15, 1950) was an American general officer holding the grades of General of the Army and later General of the Air Force. Arnold was an aviation pioneer, Chief of the Air Corps (1938–1941), Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II, the only Air Force general to hold five-star rank, and the only person to hold a five-star rank in two different U.S. military services. He had an office at Hamilton Air Base and died in Sonoma.

Our Museum Curator, Samantha Kimpel, was hired by the City to care for our Museums almost 6 years ago for 30 hours a week. Over time, the position was reduced to 20 hours, until City funding was totally eliminated. Three years ago the Guild decided to keep the position by paying her salary for 20 hours a week at the rate of \$36,000 per year. Last year we received some relief with the help of a grant. Sadly, this would exhaust our funds in a little over 3 years. The Board was forced to make a decision to eliminate the position based on economical factors. Thankfully, the City has decided to fund the position for 4 hours a week for the remainder of the year.

We will once again have a booth at the Chamber of Commerce's Art and Wine Festival, June 9 and 10. The fund raising committee will be selling historic Novato photos, books and other items of interest. We need volunteers to set up and work the booth. If you can give a couple of hours either day, please contact Tom Keena at 308-4093. This is a great way to help ignite interest in our history by directly reaching out to our community. The event entertains over 60,000 visitors over the two days. Think of the possibilities!

Our June general meeting will be June 16 with "Old Timers' Day" featuring "Show and Tell." I will be bringing a telephone directory for Novato, dated May 1954, from the Los Gatos Telephone Company. It is always great fun to hear all the old stories about Novato. I hope to see you there.

As you will remember, the Guild did not participate in the 4th of July parade last year. It has been decided we will be represented by a float or a cart in this year's parade. The theme is "Novato Families" and the Grand Marshalls will be the Nave family, Bob and Rich. We will need your help to make it a success. Anyone interested in helping to design and construct our float or be in the parade, contact me at mread1834@aol.com or call me at 717-1412.

With the reduction of the Curator's hours we will need more volunteers to work the Museums. Please contact Tom at 308-4093 if you have a few hours a month to help keep our doors open. I would like to thank Ray Dwelly and Tom Keena for stepping up to cover our two museums.

New Coffee Mug At HFHM Gift Shop

By Pat Johnstone

We just received a shipment of coffee mugs and sold 12 the first day they



were put out. The new 11 oz. two-sided, personalized coffee mug is white with red and black art work of the Hamilton Field History Museum, and the historic Hamilton Field Firehouse on it. The mug sells for \$9 and can only be purchased at the HFHM on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday from 12-4. This unique mug would make an excellent Father's Day gift.



Novato—50 Years Ago

(April, May, and June, 1962)

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 1962.

- The Novato city council formally offered to buy the Presbyterian Church property on Sherman Avenue for \$62,500. Acceptance of the offer had to be made by the Church Presbytery and officers of the church. The Rev. C.M. Croughan, Wayne Hathaway and Maynard Briggs, saw no difficulty in gaining church approval.

- Howard W. Schoof, a Boy Scout executive, and Mrs. Lucille Cannon, a housewife, were elected to the city council. They were sworn in at the April 17 council meeting.

- Funeral services were held April 11 for Orlando Bertucci, 60, who died after collapsing while attending the hardtop races at Vallejo. Mr. Bertucci was born in Italy in 1902, coming to Novato in 1910. He was employed by Pini Hardware where he became the plumber. He also went into business for himself and was active until his death.

- North Marin’s new telephone directory for 1962 set a precedent for the Bay Area. It was the first directory to list all subscribers under the new “All Number Calling” method which eliminated prefix letters. A picture of the Community House appeared on the cover of the directory.

- James C. Bunker was named new school superintendent at the school board meeting on April 24. He was picked from some 70 applicants. Bunker was previously superintendent of the Coalinga Union High School District and Coalinga Junior College.

- A boy was born May 3 to Mr. and Mrs. George Amaroli at Novato General Hospital.

- A daughter was born May 14 to Ron and Anna Cox at Marin General Hospital.

- A requiem High Mass was held for Julius Carminati, 79, who died in a local hospital. He had suffered a stroke and was hospitalized only a short time. Survivors included daughter Mrs. Joseph Salmina (Marie) and grandchildren Edward and Julieann Salmina.

- Private funeral services were held for Edwin A. Beggs, of 1049 5th Street, who passed away in a San Rafael hospital after a lengthy illness. Survivors included his wife, Rose, a daughter, Mrs. Louis Saffores, and grandchildren Pamela and Greg Saffores.

- Marino E. Lazzari was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force. Lazzari was assigned to the 9th Weather Reconnaissance Group controlled at McClellan Air Force Base. His wife, the former Reva Burdine of San Rafael, was the president-elect of the Novato Business and Professional Women’s Club.

- Erwin Scheller accepted a teaching job in Germany with U.S. Army military dependents’ schools. He was to leave in August and will teach overseas for a year or longer. Scheller had been teaching at a junior high school in Petaluma.

- The Novato Fire Department welcomed its first lady firefighter to work in early May. She was called “Resusci-Anne,” a life-like figure of an unconscious human being. Her sole purpose in life was to serve as a “patient” for rescue workers practicing the vital life-saving procedures of cardiac massage, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and mouth-to-nose resuscitation.

- Wendy Hardcastle and Karen Duncan of Novato High School were

nominated for the annual Achievement Awards program sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English.

- The Black Point Inn, part of the local scene for close to 75 years, was purchased in May by Shirley and Jeff Fisher of San Rafael. After extensive remodeling, it was opened on June 1 as the Black Point Steak House. Located at 10 Grandview, the building was believed to have been erected around 1890 by an unknown Norwegian from San Francisco.

- A tentative price tag of \$7,500,000 was placed on the “J” route freeway east of downtown Novato. The J route would leave Highway 101 just south of Novato Creek, and cross the John Novak property, and climb the hill across the railroad track near Lamont Avenue. It would then go to the top of the hill paralleling the tracks and swing north to rejoin 101 past Atherton Avenue. Note: Present route which opened in late 1974.

- Mr. and Mrs. C.H. McIntosh, 1225 Simmons Lane, sold their 10-acre property to the Freitas “C” Ranch. A Pony League ball park and the county corporation yard were located on the property at the end of Simmons Lane. The McIntoshs lived there since 1919 and planned to move to a house they owned in downtown Novato.

- The 1962 graduating class from Novato High School was the largest class graduating to date and marked the first time commencement exercises were held out of doors.

- May Nave, 79, died June 8 in a local rest home after a long illness. Mrs. Nave, former Black Point postmistress, married William Miller in 1920 and they bought the property where the Black Point Inn and Steak House was later located. They operated a store and post office there until Miller died in 1923.

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Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

February 2012

New Business – The application for next year’s grant to Marin Community Foundation was submitted. The Novato Art & Wine Festival is on the second weekend in June so a motion was made to change the NHG General Meeting to June 16. Motion was approved.

Curator’s Report – Revised Sponsorship Package (Opportunities & Worksheet) were reviewed. A sample sign for the Hamilton Field History Museum was reviewed. The curator will be out of town March 5-9.

Old Business – On March 27 the City/Guild Committee will meet and review the current contract.

Hamilton Museum – Joe Williams and Matt Cerkel have added to and changed artifacts in the crash site display. The Sonoma Museum wants to loan the Guild their Henry Harley “Hap” Arnold exhibit but the guild needs to insure the exhibit. Ray Dwelly will check on insurance.

Museum Stores – Total sales and donations from both museums for January were \$691.75.

Membership – 342 paid memberships.

March 2012

New Business – a motion was made and passed to have a booth at the Novato Art and Wine Festival. The fee is \$225 and 10%. Mike Read will ask if the fee can be reduced. Diane Campbell and Tom Keena repaired the broken hand rail at the Novato Museum. The daughter of a Novato phone operator wants to donate a 1906 desk to the guild. A motion was made and passed to accept the desk.

Treasurer’s Report – February income was \$1,125.52 and expenses were \$3,464.66.

Old Business – 40 people attended the March General Meeting. The City/Guild Agreement was updated and was sent to the city attorney for final review. A pro-

vision was added for the guild to host activities and meetings in exchange for donations.

John Trumbull showed a drawing of the 7 foot “Patriot’s Wall.” He is looking for a tile setter who could instruct the volunteers on how to mount the tiles. Estimated cost \$1,095.

Hamilton Museum – A restricted donation for exhibits in the amount of \$250 was received. A \$120 donation for a mannequin was received. Marin Magazine had an article in it using a photo from the Hamilton Field History museum collection. The Henry “Hap” Arnold collection has been appraised at \$4,835.

Museum Stores – Total sales and donations from both museums for February were \$712.75.

April 2012

New Business – The application for a grant from Marin Community Foundation was denied. The guild will participate in the 4th of July Parade if someone, with a Class A License, will drive the truck.

Curator’s Report – The Hap Arnold collection was picked up from the Sonoma Museum and taken to Hamilton Field History Museum. NHM and HFHM were registered on a Blue Stars Museum list that offers free entry into museums for veterans. The Guild does not charge a fee but the listing will reach a new audience of potential visitors.

Treasurer’s Report - The checking account balance is \$15,550.32 and the investment account is \$161,435.03. March income was \$1,306.75 and expenses were \$4,705.81, for a net loss of \$3,399.06

Old Business – The Guild is getting a booth at the Art & Wine Festival for free this year thanks to the Guild’s President.

Hamilton Museum – The Hap Arnold collection has been insured at \$120 (\$250 deductible).

Museum Stores – Total sales and donations from both museums for March were \$548.

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. Plaques cost \$250 per person named.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

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

In Memoriam

The Guild mourns the loss of the following members:

- Emil “Sam” Renati**
- Joseph Gargiulo**
- Forest Willat**

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

- Xiu Li Renati** on the death of her husband Sam Renati
- Sonia Seeman** on the death of her mother Janina Hubner
- Joe and Frank Giari** on the death of their brother Fred Giari
- Michael Giari** on the death of his uncle Fred Giari
- Michaela Curran** on the death of her son Mark Curran
- The family** of Joe Gargiulo
- Leon and Edith Willat** on the death of his brother Forest Willat
- David and Linda Willat** on the death of his father Forest Willat
- Ryan Willat** on the death of his grandfather Forest Willat

Novato Memories

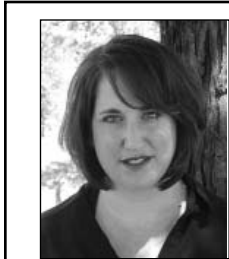
By Jim McNern



Dietrich Stroeh

Dietrich Stroeh was born in Pasadena, California in 1936. His family moved to Novato in 1940 when he was four years old. He says he lived a Tom Sawyer life growing up in Novato. Dietrich was in the first graduating class from Marion School. He has been a very active member of the Novato and Marin County community all of his life. He shares his Novato memories in this June edition of the Novato Historian. Diet remembers:

- His parents: Otto and Tyyne Stroeh (His father was from Germany and his mother was from Finland); his sisters: Martha and Karen, who were both straight A students through high school and college.
- Living first on Indian Valley Road and then at the corner of Simmons and Leese Lane.
- His neighbors: the Hebal, Frost, Christie, Wright, and Worden families.
- Attending Novato Grammar School and then Marion School and having Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Busher, Mrs. Steele, Miss Sutton, Mr. Farris and Mr. Lavaroni as his teachers.
- Miss Sutton was a short lady who wore long dresses. She was a good teacher and a very strict disciplinarian.



From the Staff Desk

by Samantha Kimpel
Museum Curator

Navigating Change

Hello NHG members and friends of the Museums. As most of you know, the curator position was defunded by the City of Novato two years ago due to the recession. The Guild, along with a private donor, helped to fund a half-time position the first year, and the Guild helped to match a grant that we received from the Marin Community Foundation in the second year. After being alerted that we would not receive the grant again this year, the Guild Board decided that the fiscally responsible solution at this point was to discontinue the funding of the curator position.

I am remaining on the City of Novato Parks, Recreation, and Community Services (PRCS) staff as a coordinator of another community grant program, but I will also work four hours a week as the staff liaison to the Guild and Museums. PRCS Recreation Operations Manager Kathy Kormos and I will be working with the Guild to develop a plan to operate the museums based mainly on volunteer leadership, and to plan for professional oversight of the city-owned buildings and collections with minimal paid staff.

My main concern in the coming months is that we establish clear policies and guidelines on keeping the museums' exhibits and their collections intact: the upkeep of our collections management system and storage, including archives and photo collections, is essential in preserving our local history; as is the need to safeguard the collections and exhibited

She played marbles with the students and made sure there was no gambling. She would keep the marbles if there were any problems. She tried to teach us Shakespeare.

- His classmates and friends: John

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objects in a manner that ensures their preservation. I will also be assisting the guild to help ensure professionally designed interpretation and exhibits.

On June 4, Kathy and I are facilitating a workshop to assist the Guild Board in crafting this plan. Fortunately, we have some great volunteer team leaders. Tom Keena has stepped forward to lead coordination of the Novato History Museum (NHM) open hours, and Ray Dwelly manages the Hamilton Field History Museum. Judy Dwelly, Cindy Motsinger, and Yvette Jackson are docent schedulers, and Pat Johnstone manages our gift shops. A number of people such as Mike Read and Roland Fuelle support these team leaders and step in whenever alternates are needed. In addition, Janice Bazaruto, who is part of the fabulous 3rd Grade Tour leadership team, is helping to establish an electronic newsletter and coordinating social media outreach. Many of these volunteers do multiple jobs to help keep our museums open, safe, and educational, along with the nearly 100 other amazing board members and volunteers who work as docents, 3rd grade tour leaders, archivists, researchers, librarians, and in facilities maintenance.

In addition, I'd like to say a special thanks to a few volunteers with whom I've worked most closely the past five years: the NHM Wednesday docent team, the NHM Thursday docent team (Anna Morrison, and up until this winter, Ann Ramsay, who work every Thursday to clip and archive all current newspaper articles and obituaries), and Judy Walker and Iva Young who have done so much work in the NHM and HFHM archives.

I look forward to helping to craft the best plan for operating our Museums: both of them are irreplaceable community assets!

50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N-3

- Members of the Novato Squares gave a surprise birthday party for one of their most faithful square dancers, Lyle Croisant, at Cloud 5 restaurant on June 9. Croisant had contributed much to the club and to square dancing and the members thought that the least they could do for him would be to have a party in which each of the members could have a part.

- George Hall, 65, of 920 Sherman Avenue, passed away June 15 in a local hospital. Mr. Hall became associated with Novato Bank (first bank in Novato), retiring as cashier soon after it merged with the Central Valley Bank in 1952. Since then he was with the Hall-Swan Insurance Agency.

- The city council turned down a proposal in late June to make the 1600 block of Center Road a two-way street during the summer months. Voting for the two-way street were Mayor Babe Silva and Councilman Everett Pozzi; however, they were overruled by the majority on the council.

- Funeral services were held on June 28 for Mrs. Lydia Askim, 65, who died at her home in Petaluma. Mrs. Askim came to Novato, from Minnesota in 1943 and

made her home here until 1959 when she and her husband moved to Petaluma. She was survived by her husband, Almer, and 9 children, 30 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

- A million-dollar "garden hotel" built by Ralph "Doc" Briggs and his son, Ralph, Jr., was scheduled to open June 10. Tomahawk Lodge was the name of the hotel-motel. Note: It is now known as Novato Days Inn at 8141 Redwood Boulevard.

- When asked what he planned to do during the summer after his graduation from Novato High, Martin Baccaglio said "I plan to work as an apprentice carpenter. Next year, I will go to Cal Poly."

- Ralph Giovannello, for the past year the assistant superintendent of instruction for Novato schools, was named superintendent of the San Jose school district in May. He signed a \$13,500 a year contract, effective July 1. Giovannello will head a 5-school district. He replaces Superintendent Philip Schneider, who resigned to take up teaching duties in Liberia.

Heard from Hamilton

By John Trumbull

The Hamilton Museum is growing and evolving. Finally you can find the museum because we have a new roadside sign, courtesy of the City of Novato. Over the years it should become even more visible as the street trees grow taller. It labels us as a location on Hanger Avenue.

M/Sgt. Jean Colby has donated her WAAF formal "mess" uniform, which is on display. The WWII services may have been patriarchal, but some of the uniforms were pretty elegant. We have both the men's and women's presentation uniforms on display now. One can imagine how regal the Officer's Club "Big Wig" affairs would have been with the attendees attired in these uniforms.

The General H. H. "Hap" Arnold exhibit, on loan from the Sonoma Historical Museum, is on display now.

This exhibit is a peek into the life of arguably the most influential of the military aviators of the reciprocating engine era of flight. He was head of the Army Air Force when Hamilton Field was dedicated in 1935, and allegedly Hamilton was his favorite base. We anticipate a more extended biographic summary of his life in the next Historian.

Joe Williams, one of our directors, has facilitated a recent donation of a lot of Viet Nam and later era military aviation articles.

Lt. Col. Tom Crull, recently deceased, flew U-2 spy planes over Russia during the cold war, was in combat where he earned 4 distinguished flying crosses, and served two tours at Hamilton as a helicopter pilot doing search and rescue work.

His daughter, Betsy, has offered several uniforms and flight suits, helmets, the awards and some other flight gear to us.

While this material is not yet on display, we are working to make it available to the viewing public. Display is a continuing challenge based on our limited space and furniture.

Welcome New Guild Members

Membership Report June 2012

Individual Memberships

Leonard Beal

Please support our Guild

Business Members

Acme Digital and
Screen Graphics
Bank of Marin

Marin Landscape Materials
McIsaac Dairy
Novato Horsemen
Pini Hardware
The Wright Salon
Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato
Zenith Instant Printing

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

It is now time to renew your membership for 2012
*A gift membership always meets the need for
that person who has everything.*

Novato Memories

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Stuve, Ralph Buckwalter, Laverne Angel, Jim Redding, Tex Byrd, George McCoy and Joyce Kingsley.

- Holidays like Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day were celebrated at school with art projects, classroom decorations and class parties.

- The old Novato Grammar School was an "L" shaped Spanish style building that had a veranda all around. It was situated on a hill at the corner of Grant Avenue and the 101 Highway. There were lots of marble holes on the southend of the playground. The merry-go-round was very popular. Children would line up before going into class.

- Sitting in class and smelling the good smells from Meyer's Bakery across Grant Avenue and hearing the loud traffic on the 101 Highway.

- Exploring every inch of Mt. Burdell and hiking to the top when it snowed.

- Hunting rabbits, quail and pheasants in the hills around town.

- Swimming and fishing for steelhead in Novato Creek.

- Attending opening night at the new Novato Theater when he was ten years old. His favorite seat was on the left side in the middle, next to the wall.

- Drinking cherry cokes at the Parrot Cage Creamery located next to the theater and listening to the juke box.

- Graduating from Marion School in June of 1949 in the Community House. The class sat on the stage. John Stuve played the piano and Jack Ward sang.

- Taking the bus each day from Novato to San Rafael High School.

- San Rafael High School teachers: Hugh and Adele Paterson, Mr. Mellen, Mr. Gulick, Angelo Colombo, and Coaches: Mr. Fink, Mr. Simontacchi, Al Thomson and Paul Miller.

- Playing center on the S.R.H.S. football team and being captain of the track team.

- Attending many dances at S.R.H.S.

- San Rafael High School friends: Tex Byrd, Jim Ingram, Don Ruoff, Rich

Ruffino, Bill Malet, Dal Penington, John Stuve, Ralph Buckwalter, the Dodds brothers, Sue Hartzell, and all the girls.

- Graduating from San Rafael High School in June of 1954.

- Attending College of Marin, and then the University of Nevada, receiving a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering in 1960.

- His first jobs were gardening and pulling weeds for Mrs. Ruhlman for 50 cents an hour, and then at age thirteen, baling hay on Reno Pronzini's stationary hay baler.

- Learning to prune fruit trees at home at nine years of age.

- In later years working for Mr. Ruhlman building houses.

- His first car was a two-door 1936 Chevrolet sedan.

- The dam that Harlan Frost built across Novato Creek each year was our swimming hole. The water backed up far enough in the creek to row a small boat around.

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Will "Tike" Lieb Grandfather of Marin County 4-H

By Toni Shroyer

With special thanks to Phil Lieb, Don Lieb and Barbara Lieb Berg

When Wilfred "Tike" Lieb started a 4-H project, he finished it. As a 4-H leader, Will helped the next generation of 4-H members in Novato build brooder houses in the 1950's. Joe McNern, a retired firefighter and third generation Novatan, remembers Will drilling a hole through his hand, and while it continued to bleed profusely, Will finished building the chicken house and only then got a bandage.

In 1942, Will became Novato's 4-H All Star which allowed him to go to UC Berkeley for their annual conference. During World War II Will had a 4-H victory garden and was involved in the Novato 4-H band playing the trumpet. In the 1940's and 1950's, the Novato 4-H Club, led by the first 4-H leader Gertrude Lane, would play their instruments and hop in their homemade floats, where the 4-H clover was painstakingly filled out with tissue paper. The 4-H members then marched and drove down Grant Avenue with 4-H pride.

In the early 1940's, Will and his 4-H Club planted over 100 cork trees down Redwood Blvd and Grant Avenue. Two trees remain today bordering Marion Field on Grant Avenue across from Lucky Supermarket. Will continued to help throughout the years at Los Pasadas,

Marin and Sonoma's 4-H Camp. He would drive his WWII jeep there from Novato. In the 1950's when Will was an adult leader at the camp, a man was working by the baseball field and got bit by a rattlesnake. Will killed the snake with a stick, picked the man up, put him in his jeep and rushed him to the hospital in Angwin and by doing so saved the man's life. In the 1940's Will built the Chapel cross that is still at the 4-H camp today.

In 2009 Will Lieb was honored with The Outstanding Marin County 4-H Alumnae Award at Marin County 4-H Achievement Day. When Will's lists of lifelong accomplishments was read, including fighting off developers all of his life, the audience wouldn't stop clapping. In a rare moment, Will took off his faithful blue hat and tipped it to the crowd.

Will Lieb was not only 4-H's hero, but Novato's. There is still a "secret" 4H step, with a cemented green 4-H clover at the old Community House in Novato where 4-H meetings were held. Will made this and it is cemented permanently in the ground.

Will was a fiercely private man, with sparkling blue eyes, he had a "Head" that was capable of fixing or figuring out anything, a "Heart" of gold, "Hands" that had

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Novato Memories

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- His family shopped at Rayburns, Pini's, Simmons Meat Market, Carlile Hardware, Novato Drug Store, Zunino's Shoe Store and the old Blacksmith Shop.
- Simmons Meat Market had sawdust on the floor.
- The present old town WAS town.
- Every weekend the traffic backed up at the stop lights on the old 101 Highway. (The present Redwood Boulevard.)
- Passenger and freight trains were a common sight in town. His father would pick up purchases at the freight depot.
- Mail was picked up at the family's box at the Novato Post Office.
- The Stroeh family did not have a phone in the forties. Their first phone was a crank phone and they were on a party line.
- The family raised ducks and geese each fall to sell for the holidays.
- Dr. Weseman putting his dislocated thumb back in place when he was in first Grade. He poured ether onto a gauze pad over his nose to put him out.
- Playing basketball with the Presbyterian Church boys.
- Being a member of the Novato 4-H Club and raising pigs as his project.
- Attending services at the Lutheran Church.
- Watching the annual Portuguese and Western Weekend parades.
- The 1945 Pini fire and other big fires

Will Lieb

Continued from page N-7

worked hard throughout his life on his chicken ranch and "Health" to have been blessed to have lived independently at 87 years old.

In honoring and remembering our 4-H and World War II hero (who earned nine bronze stars while afflicted with Malaria), and the last chicken farmer in Novato, the Lieb Family, (with special thanks to 4-H alumnus Charlie Barboni and Jim McNern for making it possible) are having the WILL LIEB ROOSTER CROWING CONTEST at this year's Marin County Fair.

on Mt . Burdell and on the north side of Indian Valley. Also, the one he accidentally started while trying to cook eggs.

- Firefighters used wet burlap sacks to fight grass fires.
- The county yard at the end of Simmons Lane that housed road construction equipment.
- Taking piano lessons from Mrs. Borloz.
- The family orchard that contained apples, pears, peaches, prunes, plums, apricots, quince, almonds and walnuts.
- Getting pails of milk from the Schellers.
- Bruno waving his cane at Novato

kids and hitting you with it if you got in his way.

- Writing "The Man Who Made it Rain" about the 1976-77 drought, and "Three Months" about his late wife Margaret's battle with pancreatic cancer.
- Helping with the building of the Nicasio Dam.
- Building the 6-1/2 mile pipeline to bring water from the East Bay across the Richmond San Rafael Bridge to Marin County during the 1976-77 drought.
- Being the General Manager of the Marin Municipal Water District.
- Representing Marin County on the

Continued on Page N-9

Novato's Treasures

DEBORBA'S BAR



DeBorba's ca. 1910



DeBorba's ca. 2012

DeBorba's Bar opened in 1909 when the DeBorbas joined forces and went into business with Thomas Keating in the Novato Hotel known as the Huntsman Headquarters. It was originally located where Marin Color is now. On December 7, 1910 the county closed the bar.

In January 1911, E.I. Butler, representing Keating and DeBorba, appeared on their behalf to obtain a license for the sale of liquor. It was taken under consideration, and granted, with the understanding and agreement that the saloon was to be closed in six months. The temporary license was granted to allow the stock on hand to be sold off. Mr. Keating said he didn't like the business

and desired to leave it thereby dissolving the partnership.

In October 1912 Joseph DeBorba & Bros. filed for a license and it was granted in October 1913 to the DeBorba Bros., Exchange Café of Novato. The new bar was opened at its present location, 819 Grant Ave.

The building is said to have been built sometime around 1900 and also housed a barber shop. A 1913 map shows the building had an addition on its east side. The barber shop was moved in to the new addition (Mary's Place) leaving the billiards and the saloon in the main building. The DeBorba family has owned the business ever since. The current family members running the bar are Toni Redding and James and Gary Simmontacchi.

Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-8

Golden Gate Bridge District Board of Directors.

• The many old Novato families he has known over the years with the names: Scheller, Ruhlman, Frost, Christie, Katlas, Kreloff, Worden, Buckwalter and Stuve.

• The many changes he has seen in

Novato over the years: the population was 2,500 when his parents moved to town in 1940. It is now over 50,000; the small farms are gone and have been replaced with houses; the many shopping centers "trying to find downtown;" the reliable new water supply with Stafford Lake and Russian River water; Novato Sanitary District created; the many new

schools that have been built; many new parks and open space; saving the wetlands east of the railroad tracks; and saving Mt. Burdell.

• The negative changes are the loss of the old Novato Grammar School (it would have made a great city hall), and losing all the fruit orchards all over town.

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
- *Novato, Then and Now* by Novato Historical Guild \$21.00
- *Hamilton Field* by Novato Historical Guild \$21.00
- *Hamilton Airfield History* \$3.00

Videos & DVD's

- Hamilton Field History (VHS or DVD) \$15.00
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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!

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

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

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Notice

General Membership Meeting

Novato Historical Guild

Saturday, June 16, 2012, at 1 p.m.

Old City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue

“Old Timers’ Day — Old Timers Especially Welcomed — Be There!

Our guest speaker will be Wayne Womack, Novato’s first mayor.

Members and prospective members are welcome

Novato History Museum—815 Delong Ave.—897-4320

Hamilton Field History Museum—555 Hangar Ave.—382-8614

COME VISIT AND BRING A FRIEND!

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

Closed Major Holidays