

# 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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October-December 2012

The Novato Historian

Volume 36, Number 4

## Monthly Meeting and BBQ at Hamilton Museum



*Roland Fuelle and his crew under the canopy behind the Hamilton Field History Museum. They prepared the food for the September 8 General Meeting.*



*Members and guests listen to a guest speaker at the September 8 meeting at the Hamilton Field History Museum.*



*The Janovers husband and wife team were guest speakers at the September 8 General Meeting. Both serve as museum docents.*

## Halloween at the Museum



*Edna Manzoni, Laurie O'Mara and Diana Goebel were in costume for the October 27 Halloween celebration at the Novato History Museum. They were there to greet visitors to the museum.*

## Food Collection for Marin Food Bank

On December 8 at the General Meeting at City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue, the Guild will be collecting canned food for the needy. This will be the eleventh consecutive year of this food drive. The canned food will be donated to the Marin Food Bank on Digital Drive in Novato. Extra prize drawing tickets will be given for each can of food you bring in. Please help to make the holiday season brighter for someone less fortunate than yourself, and take home a door prize at the same time.

**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 2012 Officers**

President Mike Read  
 Vice President Tom Keena  
 Secretary Kathryn Hansen  
 Treasurer Kathryn Hansen

**Board of Directors**

Cindy Motsinger Roland Fuette  
 John Trumbull Ray Dwelly  
 Yvette Jackson Diana Goebel  
 Louise Koenig Bill McDill  
 Sheila Brossier Joe Williams  
 Janice Bazarro Jim Davenport

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 Finance Tom Keena  
 Fund Raising Tom Keena  
 Gift Stores Pat Johnstone  
 Hamilton Museum Ray Dwelly  
 Hospitality Diana Goebel  
 Edna Manzoni  
 Mailing Bill Almeida  
 Membership Edna Manzoni  
 Nominating Yvette Jackson  
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 Anne Lehan  
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 Pat Johnstone Tonie Brown  
 Mike Read

**Typography, Layout, Composition**

Mike Clancy

**City of Novato Staff**

Recreation Operations Manager  
 Kathy Kormos  
 Museum Liaison  
 Samantha Kimpel

Original articles and photographs related to Novato history are welcomed!

**Deadline for the March issue is February 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

It's hard to believe that my two years as the Guild's president is coming to a close. Most of my goals I wanted to do as President have been completed. One of my goals when I took over as President was to increase community awareness of the Guild and the two museums we operate with the booth we had at the Novato Art and Wine Festival where some 70,000 people walked by, I think we have done that,

I also wanted to be able to reach out to our members more frequently and spontaneously to remind you of upcoming events, which we are now doing with Novato Historical Guild E-news.

We added three new Guild Board members during this time. Joe Williams is doing great work at the Hamilton Museum; Janice Bazarro, who has been involved in the 3rd grade program, has

started the E-news blast to all the Guild's members; and Jim Davenport, who has worked in many history museums in this area, is doing a great job with "Past Prefect" and helping out with the Museums.

I want to thank John Trumbull who took on the Memorial Wall at Hamilton Field Museum. We now have plaques on the wall.

I want to again thank the Board for nominating me for the Novato Citizen of the year award, for which I was selected as 2010 Citizen of the Year.

Our Fall general meeting and BBQ at Hamilton was a huge success again this year. Guest speakers were the husband and wife team of the Janovers.

Our General Meeting and Holiday Party will be held on December 8 at City Hall on Sherman Avenue from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. We will be electing a new President, Tom Keena. I want to thank Tom for taking over as President and for taking over the Novato Museum now that we no longer have a museum curator.

We will be supporting the Marin Community Food Bank again this year. Please bring food items and receive a raffle ticket for each item you bring. You will enjoy music provided by Rob Sundberg and Company.

I wish to thank the Guild's Board members and all the volunteers for the support they have given me and the museums these past two years. I still have one more year on the Board and I will be Tom Keena's Vice President for that year.

I hope to see you at the Guild's Holiday Party; if not, Happy Holidays to all!

**Nominees for 2013 Guild Board of Directors**

At the December General Meeting, members will be asked to approve the following slate of nominees to serve as the Guild Board of Directors:

**President** Tom Keena  
**Vice President** Mike Read  
**Secretary/Treasurer** Kathryn Hansen

**Board of Directors**

Ray Dwelly  
 Roland Fuette  
 Diana Goebel  
 Yvette Jackson  
 Louise Koenig  
 Bill McDill  
 Cindy Motsinger  
 John Trumbull  
 Sheila Brossier  
 Joe Williams  
 Janice Bazarro  
 Jim Davenport

*Happy Holidays  
 to all our Guild Members  
 and their families*



# Novato—50 Years Ago

## (October, November, and December 1962)

by Bill Almeida and Tonie Brown

*“Novato 50 Years Ago” is a collection of items culled by Bill Almeida from the October, November and December 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.*

- Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Mills became parents of a baby girl on October 5 at Marin General Hospital.

- The old Food Fair building on Front Street was torn down to make way for an office building. Built in 1952 by Clara Myers and George Schilling, it was the first “tilt-up” building in Novato. It was also the first building with a real parking lot. A major fire gutted the store before the demolition.

- Herman Horowitz bought out his partner, Everett Thomas, and became sole owner of the Todd’s of California dress store in the Nave Shopping Center. The two men had been in the news since August 13, when, during an argument, Horowitz allegedly went after Thomas with a claw hammer. Thomas ran to a nearby TV repair shop and called police. Horowitz was charged with “exhibiting a deadly weapon in a rude and threatening manner.”

- City councilmen rejected commercial rezoning of property on South Novato Boulevard that would have placed a gas station at the entrance to Rancho School. The October 9 meeting was in response to Richard Connell who owned the property from the Nave Shopping Center to the Rancho School entrance. There was strong opposition from the parent-teacher organizations of the community.

- Don Scribner and Martin Baccaglio, members of last year’s Hornet football team, saw action in the Cal Poly-Fresno

State game played October 5. Cal Poly won the game 25-6.

- Councilman John Angeloni was served with a notice of intention to circulate a petition of recall against him. The notice was signed by Alfred W. Bowman, 827 Reichert Avenue; sparking the move was the freeway issue.

- On October 16 an elderly Novatan suffered a broken right arm and a broken right leg when he was struck by a car at the corner of Olive and Chase Streets. Seventy-six year old Joseph C. Valim was taken by United Ambulance to Novato General Hospital. His condition was reported as good the day after the accident.

- Woody’s TV shop, located in the Nave Shopping Center, celebrated its tenth anniversary in the television business. Woody Binford, 44 year old owner of Woody’s TV and Stereo, has been a life-long resident of Novato and attended Novato Grammar School. During World War II he was a flight instructor in the Air Force. Returning to Novato he started the Novato airport and successfully operated that for several years.

- Private funeral services were held for William Gordon Voorhies, 64 on October 14, at Keaton’s Mortuary in San Rafael. Voorhies was well known as a county surveyor and civil engineer. He worked with various phases of construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. In 1937 he established his own surveying office in Novato and was a resident of Crest Drive in Black Point.

- On November 1 the Northwest Pacific Railroad took over its former depot once used as a police station by the city. The company planned to use the depot for storage by its division of engineering.

- October was a bad month for mail carriers, three Novato carriers were bitten.

- A girl was born to Mr. & Mrs. Harry Eide on November 10 at Novato General Hospital.

- A girl was born at Novato General Hospital on November 25 to John and Patricia Giari.

- Approximately 25 Novatans were present in Corvallis, Oregon, on October 20 to witness the Oregon State – University of Pacific football game in which Jack Sparrow and George Gness, both of Novato, played against each other. Gness’s Oregon State Beavers were victorious 40-6. Both remained best of friends!

- The appointment of Robert B. Lagle as Novato’s first professional planner was ratified by the city council on October 30. Lagle, a Novato resident, was to assume his duties on January 1. His salary was \$744 a month. The council was also notified that Novato Police Officer Floyd Hollowell had been named sergeant and that Katherine Clark had been selected as the third police clerk on the force.

- Mary Linda Baccaglio, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Baccaglio, and Bill Wright, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wright were singled out as 1963 Marin County 4-H All Stars in a meeting at Novato High School on November 3. Both were members of the Novato Aggie 4-H Club and had completed nine years in 4-H. Pamela Saffores was the only winner for beautification of home grounds. She was also a member of the Novato Aggies.

- Thomas D. Hardcastle of Novato was appointed a director of the Golden Gate Bridge District November 27. Hardcastle was appointed by the Marin County board of supervisors, winning out over a dozen other candidates including the 20-year incumbent Matthew Graham. Hardcastle was nominated for the posi-

*Continued on Page N-6*

# Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

## August 2012

*New Business* – Investment Advisor, Gary Bramon, reviewed the investment performance with the board for the first eight months of 2012. Performance return was 5.51% (market value increase \$6788.55 and dividends \$1852.12). The Guild will have a booth at the 2012 Holiday Crafts Faire at the Margaret Todd Senior Center on November 30 and December 1 and also at the Tree Lighting ceremony on Sherman Ave. on December 1. The Guild is talking to the city about moving the NHM to the Simmons House on Sherman Avenue. Benefits would be more square footage and a better location for foot traffic and parking. The Fire Museum could be included.

*City Report* – Kathy Kormos reported that a revised collection policy will be sent to board members for review.

*Treasurer's Report* – July income was \$6,969.55 and expenses were \$1,138.04. The checking account is \$14,154.76 and the investment account is \$162,590.62.

*Hamilton Museum* – The plan is to start a movie night showing aviation movies that will be open to the public. No fee but a donation will be suggested. The Hap Arnold exhibit was redone.

*Novato Museum* – The Guild will ask the Rotary to fund two rows of all-weather benches to accommodate the 3rd. Grade Tours. Two new docents were added.

*Museum Gift Shops* – Total sales and donations from both museums for July were \$552.05. Caps with Novato embroidered on them will be added to the inventory.

## September 2012

*New Business* – The Budget Committee for 2013 will meet on 10/8/12 at Druids Hall. Joe Williams will review the City Policy with the Guild and report back. A member of the Paranormal Society addressed the board about including both of the Guilds' museums in their filming on haunted buildings that will be aired on Channel 20. The board approved the idea. The Paranormal Society must get City approval.

*Old Business* – The September General Meeting at HFHM was well attended with approximately 47 meals served. The board reviewed the Strategic Plan for the Guild and voted to adopt it. It will be an agenda item in the future and viewed annually.

*Treasurer's Report* – August income was \$2,552.25 and expenses were \$1,061.77

*Hamilton Museum* – Bob Lowry built a wood stand for the bell in front of the museum and is now building a cabinet to store donated uniforms. He donated the cedar for the floor of the cabinet. Movie night will be Fridays at 7 p.m. based on the survey taken at the General Meeting.

*Novato Museum* – Roland Fuelle is concerned about a policy accession process for the museum and where to store donated items. The upstairs needs to be organized so a committee was formed to start that process.

*Museum Gift Shops* – Total sales and donations from both museums for August were \$552.25.

*Membership* – 434 active members and 53 members whose membership is overdue.

## October 2012

*New Business* – Novato Patch, Brent Ainsworth, spoke to the board about the growing readership of the Patch. There is a local voices blog that can be used to promote NHG and reach a wider audience. Janice Bazurto will be the point person. Proposed budget of Income and

*Continued on Page N-5*

## 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. 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."

## In Memoriam

The Guild mourns the loss of the following members:

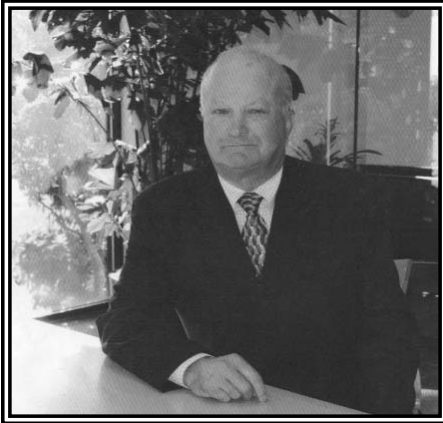
- Albert Pariani**
- Frances Skowronek**
- Martin Hanzlik**
- Margaret Mills**

## The Guild Extends Sympathy to

- The family of Albert Pariani.**
- Louise and Bill Koenig** on the death of her mother, Frances Skowronek.
- The family of Martin Hanzlik.**
- Bob and Dinah Mattos** on the death of his sister, Margaret Mills.
- Michael, Cindy and Sandra Mills** on the death of their mother, Margaret Mills.
- Paul and Virginia Terry** and family on the death of his son Patrick Terry.

# Novato Memories

by Jim McNern



**Jim Grossi**

*Jim Grossi was born in Petaluma General Hospital. He grew up on the 870-acre Grossi dairy ranch on Novato Boulevard.*

*His grandfather, Domenico Grossi, came to California from Montecarasso, Switzerland, in 1891 when he was 17 years old. His grandmother, Theresa Grossi, was from Valle Versasca, Switzerland.*

*The original ranch was founded in 1903 in Olema where the Olema Farm House and National Park Headquarters are now located. The family moved to Novato in 1906 and rented the Redmond (Ryan) ranch.*

*Domenico Grossi purchased the home ranch in 1917 for \$28,000. He could have bought the Redmond ranch for \$5,400.*

*His dad was born in 1912 in a house that was located between the island and present day golf club house on the Ryan ranch. Jim lives in a house he built on the home ranch. He shares his Novato memories in this December issue of the Novato Historian. Jim remembers:*

- His parents: Jim and Rose Grossi; and his siblings: Ralph, Ed, and Beverly.

- His Grossi aunts and uncles: Eda Spaletta, Domingo Grossi, Alfred Grossi, Henry Grossi, George Grossi, Helen Bianchi, Virginia Gallagher, Lily McWhorter and Mary Rogers.

- Attending the one-room 1st through 8th grade Burdell School and having Mrs. Florence Adams as his teacher for seven years, and Miss Diana Davidson for one year. He and Gary Corda were the only students in their class.

- The Burdell School had one room with an ante room, large windows and an outdoor restroom. His dad, uncles, and aunts all attended the school when it was located at the dam and water treatment location. Miss Gertrude Lane was their teacher.

- The children put on an annual Christmas program each year and sang traditional Christmas songs.

- For Halloween, students wore costumes to school.

- Driving to school in a yellow ranch jeep when he was nine years old.

- Burdell School was destroyed by fire in 1957. Students then attended class in a rented classroom at Our Lady of Loretto and then combined with one-room Lincoln School in Hicks Valley.

- Speaking Italian at home as a young child.

- His schoolmates and friends: Gary Corda, David and Bobby Leveroni, his Grossi cousins, Joan Carrillo, Neil McIsaac, Barbara Perry, and the Cardoza sisters.

- His neighbors: the Leveroni, Corda, and Maggetti families, and his uncle, George Grossi.

- Milking 300 cows on the ranch. The Grossi dairy was the sole supplier of milk for the Presidio in San Francisco and then they later shipped their milk to Bordens.

- Draft horses were used on the ranch in the early days to help with heavy work.

- His many jobs on the ranch were milking cows, feeding calves, hauling hay and manure and operating the feed mill. He also worked growing crops at the family's Rohnert Park Farms.

- Attending Kenilworth Jr. High in

*Continued on Page N-7*

## Board Highlights

*(Continued from Page N-4)*

Expenses for 2013 is \$22,700. This is the 4th year that the Guild will have Halloween at Novato Museum on October 27 from 12-2 p.m. Activities include telling a ghost story, meet the ghost of Henry Jones, go on a scavenger hunt and get Halloween treats.

*City Report* – Kathy Kormos handed out a Museum Liaison role and list of responsibilities which had been requested by a board member. Tom Keena requested the Novato Museum have a security password needed for Alarm Company to turn off alarm when triggered by accident. Kathy will refer request and Samantha Kimpel to provide.

*Treasurer's Report* – September income was \$968.56 and expenses were \$1,487.23.

*Old Business* – Pat Johnstone will schedule workers for the 2012 Holiday Crafts Faire. Joe Williams made the final review of the City Policy with the Guild. A motion was made and carried to adopt the policy.

*Hamilton Museum* – A sign needs to be posted “no parking overnight” because some residents are parking at the museum overnight. Kathy Kormos will contact the Maintenance Dept. An abandoned car is currently parked in the parking lot. The City is following up on it.

*Novato Museum* – There was a discussion on museum hours and should it be open during the week because it is hard to find volunteers for Wednesday and Thursday Kathy Kormos will check with the city regarding a change.

*Museum Gift Shops* – Total sales and donations from both museums for September were \$558.26. The Guild received a royalty check of \$167.32 from Arcadia Publishing for the Hamilton Field book and the Novato book.

### Special Announcements

Please call Diane Campbell, our Sunshine Committee Chair-person at 415-883-7265 with the details of any special announcements you would like published.

# 50 Years Ago

*Continued from Page N-3*

tion by Supervisor William A. Gness of Novato.

- A boy was born on December 19 to Robert and Edna Manzoni at Novato General Hospital.

- A Novato police officer resigned and the city council debated for three hours on December 5 whether another one should have also resigned. Police Officer James Grassley resigned, partly stemming from his wrecking a police car September 8 on Canyon Road. The second officer earned the disapproval of the council because he has gone through personal bankruptcy proceedings. He was reportedly hard pressed financially because of medical bills.

- Well known builder Jack W. Shields, of 610 Wilson Avenue, died Christmas Eve of cancer. He had completed his Shields Lane subdivision, which had been a long-time dream of his. He had done extensive building all over California before locating in Novato in 1945. Shields also built the Tresch building, the Dr. Ralph Weseman building, the North Marin Water Co. building on Vallejo Street and the Dr. Charles

Stafford veterinarian building across from Our Lady of Loretto Church.

- The Novato Post Office won first prize in the Advance – Chamber of Commerce Christmas decorations for Commercial and Groups Division. The post office was located at 1118 1st Street. The building was decorated by employees on their off days at no cost to the postal service.

## Interesting Dates in Novato's History

- 1850—Postmaster's house built (now the History Museum).
- 1879—Opening of first train depot for Northwestern Pacific railroad line.
- 1889—Loustanau Hall was built (now Druid Hall).
- 1896—Novato Presbyterian Church built (now City Hall).
- 1913—Novato Bank established, Novato's first bank.
- 1916—Novato Utilities incorporated to include electricity, water and phone.

## New Items at Museum's Gift Shops

*by Pat Johnstone*

We now sell two styles of caps with NOVATO embroidered on them. They sell for \$15 and come in black, royal blue, red and navy blue. The caps are brushed cotton twill with adjustable Velcro closure. We also are selling white polo shirts at Hamilton Field History Museum for \$20. These shirts are 100% cotton with a loose sleeve and have a P-51 or a P-38 design on them.



You can purchase these items at Novato History Museum, Hamilton Field History Museum or at the Holiday Crafts Faire on Friday, November 30, 6-9 p.m. or on Saturday, December 1, 10-4 p.m. at the NHG Booth, in the lobby, of Margaret Todd Senior Center. We also will have a booth at the Downtown Tree Lightening Ceremony on Saturday, December 1.

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Membership Report December 2012

#### Individual Memberships:

L. S. Witter

#### Family Membership:

Jim and Shelley Grossi

#### Student:

Chase Caligiuri

#### 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 2013.**

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

*Congratulations  
to  
Ernie and Charlene  
Funino  
on their  
50th Anniversary*

# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-5*

Petaluma for 9th Grade and then on to Petaluma High School. The school bus picked him up at the ranch, and it was a very long bus ride over the back roads into Petaluma.

- It was a big adjustment going from Burdell School with twelve students to Petaluma High School with 1600 students.

- Joining the Novato Valley 4-H Club when he was nine years old and having dairy and swine as his projects. One year he raised 600 weiner pigs. He would get 16 piglets out of each sow. At age 15, he built a pig barn for his spotted poland china hogs.

- Showing his cattle each year at Petaluma, Calistoga, and Santa Rosa

Fairs.

- Giving a 4-H demonstration on "dehorning cattle" with Saralee McClelland and winning Gold at U.C. Davis.

- Always having at least 8 to 10 workmen on the ranch milking cows or working in the feed mill. His mother fed all of them. They had two dining rooms in the house.

- Being very active in F.F.A. at Petaluma High School where he held many offices in addition to being senior class president and student body president.

- Graduating from Petaluma High

*Continued on Page N-8*

## DeLong and Sweetser Visit Pleasant Valley School

This week Novato's Pleasant Valley School hosted Giving Day/Grandparents Day. A tradition at this school is tree planting. This year two parents (Andrew Fox and Ross Sargent) playing the roles



of Francis DeLong and Joseph Sweetser gave a talk about the old days in Novato when fruit trees existed where houses now stand. Their conversation was entertaining and informative. After the conversation the students shared a pledge with Sweetser and

DeLong to take care of the trees.

*"I promise to take care of these trees so that their roots will grow deep, their limbs will grow strong, their leaves will color the seasons and their fruit will offer nourishment. I promise, that as I grow, I will watch over these trees knowing they will carry the history of today's Giving Day into tomorrow."*

Following is part of the conversation:

**DeLong:** Hello my name is Francis DeLong and I am an early pioneer who traveled west during the covered wagon days to Novato in the 1850's to this area that you now call Novato.

**Sweetser:** My name is Joseph Sweetser and I am also an early pioneer. At the age of nine years old with my family we traveled from Maine around Cape Horn and up the coast of South and North America to Marin and settled on a Novato land grant.

**DeLong:** When Joseph and I arrived here there were no fruit orchards, no school, no post office, no railroad, no town. Some people believed this land was so undesirable that it was only good for raising cows, but we both realized this was a fruit paradise with the climate and soil perfect for orchards of all different kinds of fruit trees.

**Sweetser:** Francis and I met, became friends and formed a partnership. In 1856,

*Continued on Page N-9*

### NOVATO HISTORICAL GUILD 2013 Proposed Budget

**INCOME**

Books.....	\$	1,500
Bricks Sales.....		2,000
Donations .....		6,000
Fundraising Event .....		1,000
Gift Shop .....		4,000
Membership Dues .....		8,000
Miscellaneous .....		200

**TOTAL INCOME ..... \$ 22,700**

**EXPENSES**

Archive Supplies.....	\$	250
Bank and Credit Card Charges .....		700
Brick Expenses.....		1,000
Building Maintenance Expense - Hamilton .....		2,000
Building Maintenance Expense - Downtown .....		900
Dues and Fees.....		400
Fundraising and Promotion.....		400
Gift Shop Merchandise.....		4,000
Hospitality Committee .....		800
Insurance - D&O and Liability .....		2,000
Membership Drive .....		100
Memorial Plaques .....		50
Miscellaneous .....		200
Museum Exhibit.....		4,000
Newsletter Support .....		800
Office and Computer Supplies .....		1,000
Postage, Bulk Permit.....		1,000
Recognition - Volunteers .....		1,700
Sales Tax.....		1,000
Sunshine Committee.....		100
Third Grade Program .....		300

**TOTAL EXPENSES .....\$ 22,700**



# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-7*

School in 1964, and then going to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and studying dairy husbandry.

• In 1973, he went to U.C. Davis to study civil engineering. He received a B.S. in civil engineering with an emphasis on engineering planning.

• After college working as a consultant with McKay and Stomps; then founding Western Planning and Development in Fairfield in 1980. He is now with CSW Stuber Stroeh in Novato.

• Stafford Lake was finished in 1952. The equipment then came to work on a dam on the ranch.

• Hunting everything on the ranch like:

doves, quail, deer, rabbits, geese and ducks. All hunting resulted in food for the family.

• Deer hunting on the ranch with Al Giddings, Captain of the Fish and Game Department, and his uncles and cousins.

• Uncle George and Aunt Mary lived on the west end of Stafford Lake, and then moved into Elsie Anderson's house which was moved from downtown Novato onto the ranch.

• Seeing all kinds of wildlife on the ranch over the years including: deer, birds, waterfowl, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, eagles, hawks, possums, skunks, badgers and raccoons. (His dad reported seeing a bear one year.)

• Duck hunting on the ranch with Bill Gnos.

• Being sent to town by his dad early in the morning to pick up the cow milkers who had gone out partying at the Town Club, DeBorba's, and Joe's Crossroads.

• The day he saw a 60 to 70 pound mountain lion in his backyard and also seeing a larger one (150 to 170 pounds) while riding horseback.

• His dad would bring horses into town to Stephen Porcella's Blacksmith Shop to be shod.

• Aunt Lily would drive into Novato early each morning in an old truck hauling milk cans to the train depot. (She would also bring in eggs from the ranch to sell to eager buyers.)

• The remains of an ancient Indian village was once discovered on the ranch.

• Dr. Weseman was the family doctor. He would make home visits to the ranch whenever needed. Dr. Weseman was very much loved and respected by the Grossi family. They even named brother Ralph after him.

• Attending Mass at Our Lady of Loretto in the old church on Grant Avenue.

• Shopping at Rayburns, Carlile Hardware, and Pini Hardware and Mill.

• CVS/Longs was an orchard.

• Novato Grammar School was on a hill at the corner of Grant Avenue and the 101 Highway.

• The old fire station No. 1 was on Grant Avenue across from the Town Club.

• Stores were on Grant Avenue from the railroad to the Catholic Church.

• Dairy, beef, and hogs were the livestock raised on the ranch. They tried raising 180 head of sheep one year, but lost too many to varmints.

• Phone service on the ranch was a hand-cranked phone on the wall, and people were on party lines. You had a special ring to signal you that someone was trying to reach you.

## Novato's Treasures NOVATO UTILITIES COMPANY



ca. 1912



ca. 2012

On January 6, 1908, James W. Cain was granted a franchise for a telephone line from Novato to Grandview (Black Point) for a term of ten years, accepted by the Marin County Board of Supervisors for a bid of \$20. He would call his franchise the Novato Rural Telephone Company. From this small start he would go on to take over the Sunset Telephone Company, would start a water company (it would become North Marin Water District), and start an electric company.

He would incorporate in February 1916 along with his brother Albert J. Cain. The new

corporation would be called the Novato Utilities Company.

The following year, Fred Mahlstedt contracted a lease agreement with the company for a new building he constructed at Grant and Machin Avenues. They moved the telephone exchange into the building on August 1, 1917. The company bought the property from Mr. Mahlstedt when the five-year lease expired.

In the late forties and early fifties it was the Tresch Electric Co., Larry Tresch was Al Cain's son-in-law.

For the past seven years the store has been Old Town Liquors.

*Continued on Page N-9*



# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-8*

• Mail was delivered to a mailbox out on the road.

• Old Novato families with the names: Baccaglio, Pimentel, Corda, Leveroni, Verissimo, Sanchez, Silveira, Nunes, Panfiglio and Marzell.

• The many changes in Novato over the years: the closing of Hamilton Field;

the increased population; heavy traffic; hardly anyone left who understands country living, hunting, fishing, wildlife interaction, and protection of the land as practiced by his father and grandfather.

• The changes in Marin County: fewer dairies (a major ag business); less support for businesses for agriculture and more emphasis in boutique agriculture.

# Sweetser/DeLong

*Continued from Page N-7*

we bought 15,000 acres called Rancho de Novato and began to plant orchards and vineyards. We had a vision for thousands of trees bearing delicious fruit. We knew that people all over the world would welcome such fruit.

*The remainder of this conversation and more photos will be continued in our next issue.*

## 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
- Novato History (VHS or DVD) . . . . . \$10.00  
(available only through the museum)

### Sweatshirts (S, M, L, & XL) . . . . . \$18.00

- Novato History Museum (blue or green)

### Ornaments

- Novato City Hall . . . . . \$12.75

### 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 . . . . . \$12.50
- 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, P.O. Box 1296, Novato, CA 94948.**

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

- |   |         |      |
|---|---------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (full time) membership | \$10    | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership          | \$20    | year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership              | \$30    | 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 |

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Interested in volunteering? \_\_\_\_\_



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*The Novato Historical Guild*

*Wishes you all Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year  
and cordially invites you to the*

*December General Meeting  
Election of Officers and Christmas Party*

**Saturday, December 8, 2012, at 1 p.m.**

**Old City Hall, 901 Sherman Avenue**

**Music by Rob Sundberg Combo**

*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**