

# 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 2013

The Novato Historian

Volume 37, Number 2

## Druids History at City Hall Meeting



*Bill Glass, long-time Guild member, was guest speaker at the March 9 Guild meeting at Novato City Hall. Bill gave an interesting talk on the history of the Ancient Order of Druids and Druid history in Novato.*

## Novato Historical Guild Meeting June 15

On Saturday, June 15, the Guild will have its 23rd annual "Old Timers' Day." We will be going back to what this meeting was in 1990, which was "show and tell." Find any family photos or an item that you believe is historically interesting and bring it for all to enjoy.

We hope to show videos of the old days and newspaper items from the 1950's to 1970's.

The June 15 meeting starts at 1 p.m. at City Hall on Sherman Avenue. Refreshments will be provided by Guild volunteers. Come and bring a friend.

## Poster Goes to Hall of Fame

Bob and Edna Manzoni have been notified by the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., that an original poster announcing that Vernon "Lefty" Gomez would be pitching against Frank Manzoni on July 17, 1927, in Point Reyes, would be accepted by the Hall of Fame. The Manzoni's will deliver it personally in September.

## New Board member, Susan Magnone



Susan recently retired as the Associate Superintendent of the Contra Costa County Office of Education after 40 years in education. Positions she held in other parts of California include history teacher, elementary school principal, and director of a training program for school administrators.

Susan and her husband moved to Novato twenty-three years ago from Thousand Oaks, California. They have also lived in Germany and London, England. In addition to serving on the NHG board, Susan is a docent at the downtown history museum and a member of Soroptimist International of Novato. In her words, "I'm very pleased to be a member of the NHG board involved in preserving the past. By sharing our history, the two museums help to create a sense of community."

*Happy  
50th Anniversary  
Congratulations to Tom and  
Arleen Skinner on their 50th  
Anniversary on June 1.*

## 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 2013 Officers

President	Tom Keena
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Mailing	Bill Almeida
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	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 September issue is July 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

Tom Keena

President, Novato Historical Guild

Navigating your way down a busy narrow sidewalk is always a bit tricky. Add to this a flock of young school kids and it gets even more difficult. That's exactly the situation I found myself in while traversing the 800 block of Grant Ave. several weeks ago.

Fortunately, I was able to escape into an alcove. As the young students passed by, I noticed what appeared to be a woman lecturing them. She stopped and began describing the history of the area we were in. I immediately realized it was a 3rd grade tour from our Novato Historical Museum.

Their guide, in a wide brim straw hat, spoke with infectious enthusiasm as she pointed out the historical buildings. As she spoke of the Carlile store across the street, it took me back to the 1950's when my mom and I were in that store. Mom bought a kettle from old Mr. Carlile.

As with me, hopefully, this tour will bring some great memories to these students in years to come. My hope is that it gives them a greater sense of belonging to their lovely city. Perhaps some day they will tell their children about this day in Old Town Novato.

Our 3rd grade program is in the process of conducting thirty student groups through the museum and downtown area this year. We even had a group from St. Isabellas grammar school in Terra Linda. It's a wonderful program that has a tremendous community outreach. I encourage anyone interested to call Janice Bazurto and become part of the team.

I hope everyone will take a few minutes to visit our incredible Hamilton museum. Ray Dwelly and Joe Williams, along with their dedicated docents, have really done a great job. They are continually upgrading exhibits and have many plans for future improvements.

Iva Young, in addition to many hours of

volunteer work, has once again made a generous donation of books and artifacts to the Hamilton museum.

While you're touring the museum, check out the 'link trainer.' It's an old flight simulator from the 1950's. Yes, Iva Young told me she operated it when the machine was at Crissy Field.

There's a steady stream of new artifacts arriving each week. Thankfully, Ray has the help of Board member Jim Davenport in cataloging these many items. Ray has already lined up a wonderful speaker for the September meeting. I won't tell you who. You'll just have to plan to be there. Why not top it off with a visit to Roland Fuette's BBQ for one of his choice hot dogs.

The Downtown museum is seeing a few changes. Ron Vela and his exhibit committee have changed a few exhibits and have plans for more.

Rotary will be building benches for the 3rd grade tours. In addition, newest Board member, Susan Magnone, will be leading a team to better organize the upstairs archives.

Special thanks to Nick, from the City of Novato, for improving the exterior lighting. Drive by after dark and see what I mean. Also, thank you Diane Campbell for hand painting the sign out front.

There's a real danger in writing these articles each quarter. My greatest fear is that a volunteer will be offended by not being mentioned. Unfortunately, the editorial staff gives me limited space. It would be impossible to mention each volunteer or docent without consuming multiple pages.

Our Guild has a number of 'unsung' heroes. By the way, that's the theme of Novato's July 4th parade. Please contact me if you are interested in decorating our float or riding on it.

See you at our June General Meeting!



# Novato—50 Years Ago

## (April, May, and June 1963)

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 1963.*

- Three Novato youngsters entered purebred Holsteins in the Grand National Junior Livestock Exposition at the Cow Palace in San Francisco in Early April. Marsha Baccaglio and Sara McClelland entered two cows each and George McClelland one.

- A new Lady Baltimore Bakery opened on April 5 at the Novato Fair Shopping Center. Lady Baltimore Bakeries featured whipped cream pastries and used in excess of 600 gallons of whipped cream a month. The new bakery was to be managed by Rachel Conkling, former assistant manager of the Terra Linda unit. Maria White of Novato was her assistant.

- Robert J. Busher was appointed general manager of Pini Mill and Assistant Secretary of the H. Pini & Company Inc. Busher was with the firm since 1946 and was associated with the business part-time during WWII. Busher was also a commissioner of the Novato Fire District and a member of the Novato Rotary Club.

- General Telephone & Electric Corporation planned to offer an exchange of 2.2 shares of its common stock for one share of common stock of Western California Telephone Company. Western Cal operated the Novato phone exchange. General Telephone was the largest independent telephone company in the county. Some Novatans were disappointed to find they held preferred stock shares instead of common stock.

- Pioneer Novatans, Mr. and Mrs.

Cherubino Paladini, were guests of honor at a bon voyage party April 7. The occasion was their return to Italy after 42 years. They planned to stay in Lucca, Italy, for three months. The couple came to Novato in September of 1921. They acquired acreage and started fruit orchards off Wilson Avenue.

- Paced by Barry Hachmyer's even par 36 round, the Novato High golf team defeated Tamalpais 4-2 on April 4 at the Indian Valley Golf course. Others competing against Tam were Terry Young, Bob Bonner, Ken Marder, Gerry Schefer and Neil McIsaac.

- Concern about the low salaries of teachers in the Novato School District was expressed by Supt. James Bunker on April 23. His remarks came after salaries in line with those paid elsewhere in the Bay Area were asked by teachers of the Novato school board. Presenting the proposals of the Novato Teachers Association was John Irwin, Chairman of the teacher's salary committee.

- The 78th Fighter Wing, and the U.S. Air Force, bid goodbye to the 83rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Hamilton Air Force Base on May 3. Because of the "inner family" nature of the deactivation ceremony and parade, the public was not encouraged to attend, a Hamilton spokesman said.

- Funeral services were held on May 1 in Petaluma for Walter Von Tagen, 78, of Novato. He was owner of a cotton and burlap sack business. He was survived by wife Lela, and sons James and Leland Hill of Novato.

- Dr. Joseph Sereda, 44, a successful medical physician, decided to specialize as a surgeon, a project that would take four to five years. Dr. Sereda announced his retirement from local practice to devote himself to four years of training as a general surgeon. The Sereda family left Novato the first week in June for

Baltimore. Dr. Sereda was chief of staff of Novato General Hospital in its first year of operation.

- Robert J. McKeay, brought to Novato in 1954 to help organize and plan Novato High School, resigned as principal on May 7. McKeay, 57, noted that a "work experience education" program was being planned in the district and asked to be reassigned to lead the project. He also requested he head the adult education program of Novato High.

- Jack Sparrow, 21, former Novato High star quarterback, signed to play professional football with the San Francisco 49ers. Sparrow, a 1959 graduate of Novato High, was due to graduate from University of the Pacific in early June. While playing college football, Sparrow suffered a neck injury from which he recovered.

- Neil O'Hair, 74, of Sutro Avenue, died May 18 of a heart attack in a local hospital. A longtime resident and rancher in Novato, Mr. O'Hair was president of the P. E. O'Hair Wholesale Plumbing Company in San Francisco. He was a 50-year member of San Rafael Elks Lodge 1108 and Native Sons of the Golden West.

- William Leigh Metteer, 32 was named principal of Hill School. Starting salary was announced as \$10,777. Gerald F. Ellyson, 45, was hired to take over at Novato High as principal on July 1. Ellyson's salary was \$13,086.

- William Jonas announced he would lease space for a Roger Wilco supermarket in a shopping center builder John Novak planned to erect at the corner of Novato Boulevard and Wilson Avenue. Novak, who owned the 7 ½ acre property, zoned for a shopping center since 1955, said work on the shopping center would probably start in June.

- George H. Gnos Jr., graduated from

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# Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Pat Johnstone

## February 2013

Guest speaker, Gary Butler, from State Farm Insurance explained what Director's & Officer's Insurance was and why non-profit organizations needed to be insured.

*New Business* – The Novato Museum now has an Exhibit Committee chaired by Ron Vela. The first rotating exhibit will be of pioneer families (Pacheco, Nave & Burdell) in October during National Family History Month. A banner will be designed to hang across DeLong Ave. from October 7-21. Tom Keena showed the board an example of the compilation of volunteer hours that docent Pat Eklund created for the Guild that will be sent to the city quarterly.

*City Report* – A potential fundraising event, The Human Race, is May 11. The event is for non-profits to raise money for their organizations. The City Council passed the agreement with the Novato Historical Guild.

*Reports* – Hamilton Field History Museum has had 332 visitors so far, of which 80 were 3rd Graders from Hamilton Elementary School. Joe Williams designed a new exhibit related to the Hamilton Field Theatre that was built in 1938. Tom Keena reported that the new exterior lighting at the Novato Museum is spectacular thanks to Nick, a City Employee. The parking lot is safer now. Pat Johnstone reported that the City's website has an obsolete gift shop page for the Guild. Pat met with the City's Museum Liaison and gave her an updated list. Total sales and donations from both museums for January were \$784.

## March 2013

*New Business* – Joe Williams has resigned from the board but will continue to work on exhibits at the Hamilton Museum. Two candidates have been nominated for the position: Kevin Morrison and Susan Magone. A vote will take place next month. A motion was made to digitize Novato Advance microfilm from 1922 to the present at a cost of \$10,000. The motion passed. On May 4 the Guild

will participate in a "School Fuel" event, Tour of Novato and Fun Fair. The Guild will man a booth at the Art & Wine Festival on June 8 and 9.

*Treasurer's Report* – Total in checking and investment account is \$191,829.41. February's income was \$2,429.36 and expenses were \$609.62.

*Old Business* – The Ryan family would like permission to use the Novato Historical Guild name on a plaque that is being installed at Stafford Lake. A motion was made and passed.

A motion was made and passed to purchase Director's and Officer's Insurance for the Board. Cost for \$1 million coverage with \$1,000 deductible is \$1,530 per year.

*Reports* – There is a new exhibit at Hamilton Museum on Avionics designed by Joe Williams. On April 3 there will be a presentation at HFHM on the Merchant Marines in the North Atlantic. At the Novato Museum there is a timeline of Novato on the walls, thanks to Mike Read. The 3rd Grade Tours have begun.

*Membership* – Edna Manzoni reported that the Guild has 338 paid members and 106 overdue members.

## APRIL 2013

*New Business* – The responsibilities of a Board Member and of a Trustee were listed in a handout for member's reference. Janice Bazarro asked for members to research articles and send them to her. She also asked for current event information for the E-News. The new Board Member will be Susan Magnone. A motion was made that the Guild purchase a Memorial Tile for Iva Young (volunteer and military personnel retired) who has donated over \$10,000 and artifacts to the Guild. The motion was approved.

*City Report* – Samantha Kimpel reported that a formal request needs to be made to the City to get an internet upgrade at NHM and that the Guild needs to pay for the upgrade. Samantha will check to see if there is a city grounds maintenance schedule for the NHM.

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## 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 member:  
**Jane Ruhlman Eide**

## The Guild Extends Sympathy to

**Hans Eide** on the death of his mother, Jane Eide.

**Dede Sand** on the death of her sister, Jane Eide.

**George and Mimi Nunes** on the death of his mother, Isabel Nunes.

# Novato Memories

by Jim McNern



**Fern Weseman**

*Fern Weseman was born in San Francisco. She is the only child of Dr. Ralph and Gladys Weseman. Her father was Novato's only medical doctor for many years. He came to Novato in 1935. Fern attended Novato Grammar School and then Marion School up through the sixth grade. She finished seventh and eighth grades at Redwood Jr. Academy in Santa Rosa, and then went on to PUC Preparatory School in Angwin for her high school years. She attended Pacific Union College, College of Marin, and Samuel Merritt Nursing School in Oakland. Dr. Weseman died in 1973. Fern lives in Novato and shares her Novato memories in this June edition of the Novato Historian. Fern remembers:*

- Her parents: Dr. Ralph and Gladys Weseman.
- Living in the apartment above the medical offices at 863 Grant Avenue, and then to the home her parents built at 851 Mahlsted Park Place.
- Attending Novato Grammar and Marion Schools and having Mrs. Hulme, Miss Dalessi, Mrs. Olson, Mrs. Busher and Mrs. Steele as her teachers.
- There were no Kindergarten classes offered in Novato in the 1940's.
- The little red chairs in Mrs. Hulme's first grade classroom.

- Learning cursive writing in second grade. Classmate Eddie Antonio could write well in cursive.

- The merry-go-round, bars, and rings were popular with the children at recess.

- Her classmates and friends: Joan Smith, Hannah Lausmann, Claudette Borloz, Sandra Glass, Marlene Guibbini, Carol Thumb, Rosalie Skinner, Delaine Zanco, Barbara Milano, Erline Porter, Joan Roix, Sharon Smith, Becky Hamilton, Vernon Dwelly, Glen Wilfert, Ronald Renati, Ed Antonio, John Kingsley, Edwin Katlas, Walter Nolan, Bill Bucci, Bronce Chapin, Jim Rizzo, Catherine Lindley, Annabelle and Randall Swank, Jeanette Hansen, Valerie Schwindt and Gilbert Medeiros.

- William J. J. Smith became Superintendent of Schools in the early 1950's.

- Exchanging valentines with her classmates and decorating the valentine box.

- The pine trees on the school grounds and the many steps leading up to the front door of the Novato Grammar School.

- Christmas lights were put on the big corner pine tree each December.

- Miss Sutton commanded respect and everyone dreaded being sent to her office. She was excellent at playing marbles with the boys.

- Her mother being president of the Novato Grammar School P.T.A. one year.

- Being in the first group of classes to move on to and open Marion School in the early 1950's.

- Dancing the minuet for a school program in fourth grade with Claudette Borloz, Hannah Lausmann, Sandra Glass, John Kingsley, Vernon Dwelly, Jim Rizzo and Billy Bucci.

- Reciting "The Night Before Christmas" with Sandra Glass and Claudette Borloz at a Christmas program while in Mrs. Busher's fifth grade.

- Attending double sessions in the

fourth and fifth grades at Novato Grammar School.

- Her parents' first home in Novato was in one of two small cottages on Grant Avenue next to Scott's Store. One was later moved to the back alley. Herb Graham built an office with an upstairs apartment on the empty lot. (E.R. McDonald was in charge of the construction.)

- The family lived in the upstairs apartment. During World War II there were "blackouts" and the dark shades had to be pulled down and only a few dim lights could be on.

- Monthly rent for the office was \$25.00 a month and house calls were \$3.00.

- Her father made two trips to San Rafael each day. He would get up very early in the morning and drive down to the Cottage Hospital to perform surgery, deliver babies, and see patients.

- Office hours were Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to whenever - followed by house calls. Dr. Weseman had office hours on Monday evenings after a quick dinner at home. He would also see patients on Sunday mornings, which often ran into the afternoon.

- Mrs. Weseman always had dinner ready for 6 o'clock and if Dr. Weseman wasn't home by 8 o'clock, she put it away. Her parents always kept in close contact because there were always emergencies. Many holiday dinners were interrupted by phone calls and emergencies and her father had to leave.

- Payments to her dad were often in the form of fruit, vegetables, chickens, eggs, beef, venison, ducks, and handyman services like building cabinets, painting and other repairs. Kate Dixon always had a bucket of apricots every summer.

- Her dad would get lots of Christmas gifts each year like homemade goodies and candy from his patients. Frank Galli always brought panettone and eggnog in

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# 50 Years Ago

*Continued from Page N-3*

Oregon State College on June 2. A member of the first graduating class of Novato High School in 1959, George attended college on a football scholarship. He planned to continue his studies at the University of California for his master's degree in business and law administration.

- Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Russell announced the forthcoming marriage of their daughter, Bonnie, to Howell Broxton. The nuptials were scheduled to take place June 29 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in San Rafael with the Rev. Peter Farmer, formerly of Novato, officiating.

- Arleen Kolby and Thomas Skinner were married June 1 in Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church. The Green Mill

Inn in Cotati was the location of a buffet style dinner and reception for the wedding party.

- One hundred and sixty-five seniors graduated from Novato High School on June 13. Diplomas were passed out by Principal Robert McKeay and Leonora Dougherty, clerk of the school board. Valedictorian Wendy Hardcastle, in her address, stressed the need for the well-rounded student and the need for a well-rounded education. Miss Hardcastle was chosen valedictorian because she had earned the highest average grade during her four years at Novato High.

- A resolution commending former county tax collector, Martin F. Donohue, for the "confidence, efficiency, and

integrity with which he administered his public trust" for 32 years was unanimously passed by the board of supervisors. A Novato resident for many years, Donohue retired from the combined offices of county treasurer and tax collector in January of this year.

- Novato Police Officer Harold Sutton was fired from the force, accused by Police Chief Roy McLaren of lying about his relationship with a married woman. City Administrator John Baget said Sutton's dismissal was effective March 31. Baget said that McLaren's recommendation for the dismissal "resulted from a detailed investigation and interview of the parties familiar with the situation."

- Postmaster Harry Overly was seeking bids to conduct a branch post office in the Ignacio area. The contract would be for three years, until June 30, 1966. Roger Wilco supermarket, 455 Entrada Drive, was holding the contract where the branch was then located.

- The Novato post office was in the process of implementing the post office department's new program for negotiation and consultation on grievances, working conditions, personnel practices and other related matters. President Kennedy's executive order 10988 of January 17, 1962, officially recognized federal employee organizations for the first time.

- Novato High School students celebrated "Grub Day" on Friday, April 5. Most students wore rags, old discarded clothes, and some make-up to make their appearance even more distressing. "Grub Day" was the final day of the first Spring Spirit Week at Novato High. The junior class held a pie-throwing contest on Wednesday and the sophomores a bicycle race on Thursday.

- The City of Novato decided to lower the boom on the wrecking yard of Louis Worden at the north end of Simmons Lane. The city filed an action in Superior Court asking the court to order Worden to terminate the operation of his junk yard and to remove it. Worden was operating the wrecking yard in violation of the city zoning ordinance.

## Welcome New Guild Members

### Novato Historical Guild Membership Report June 2013

#### Individual Memberships:

Linda Corder  
Diana Ruth Nichols  
David Woody

#### Family Memberships:

June & Sam Thomas

#### Please support our Guild

#### Business Members:

Acme Digital and Screen  
Graphics

Andrew McAgdon Landscaping  
Bank of Marin  
Marin Landscape Materials  
McIsaac Dairy  
Nave Enterprises  
Pini Hardware  
The Wright Salon  
Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato  
Zenith Instant Printing

Did you know that you receive the *Novato Historian* with your paid dues each year? Some will not receive the September issue of the *Novato Historian* because of unpaid dues. **Do not delay. It is now time to renew your membership for 2013.**

*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.*

# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-5*

a large jar. One year someone gave him a Christmas goose.

- Dr. Weseman would perform minor surgeries, tonselectomies, set broken bones, see people after auto, farm and gun accidents, and a number of incidents involving horseback riders.

- Her dad sometimes smelled of ether after surgeries in his office.

- Some of the workers in Dr. Weseman's office were Harriet Strombeck, Mattie Crandall, Jo Anfiblio, and Barbara Lannin.

- The office phone number was 14J and was a private line.

- In the late 1930's, her dad had a dentist named Dr. Walter Cuthbertson in the office with him.

- Sitting with patients after tonselec-tomies in her dad's office.

- Dr. Weseman made house calls all over Novato, and to Nicasio, Olema, Pt. Reyes, and Lucas Valley. He went to many ranches in the area,

- She went along with her father on some house calls and would open and close the gates on the ranches so her dad could drive through. Most times she would wait in the car reading and coloring. Sometimes she would be invited to get out and play with the barn cats and kittens.

- Her dad always drove a Chevrolet car and during World War II no new cars were available. He made two trips a day to Cottage Hospital and then to Ross and Marin General Hospitals. He always carried his medical bag with him - even to visit with the grandparents in Mt. View and on vacation.

- Enjoying visits to the Stafford home on Railroad Avenue. Dr. Charles Stafford was Novato's veterinarian. Their children were Michael and Susan. She loved seeing the animals that were boarded there. Marie Stafford was a wonderful cook and baker and each Christmas she presented the Weseman family a box of delicious homemade cookies. The Staffords came to Novato about the same time her parents arrived. Marie and Fern's mother

were special friends. Fern remembers the time Michael broke his arm and was in a lot of pain.

- Kitty Chaplin was the telephone operator. The Weseman's had a private line at home and their home phone number was 32J. There were no answering machines in the old days. The phone rang at home and in the office. Making house calls were the norm after dinner. Dr. Weseman would make a list of the houses and phone numbers he would be visiting and would leave it at home. If someone called for the doctor, Mrs. Weseman would look at the list and calculate where he might be and call that farm. Even after dial phones came in 1951, the phones were still ringing both at the office and house.

- Mail was collected at P.O. Box F2 at the Novato Post Office. Postal workers were Carrie DeSousa and Edna Smith.

- Her mother told her when she was a little girl if she was out in front of the doctor's office on Grant Avenue and saw Jack Sparrow across the street in front of the Novato Advance office to yell, "Hi, Jack Sparrow!"

- Lorrie D'Ambrogio and Margaret Mattos babysitting her and answering the phone. They were both very fun.

- Shopping was all in Old Town on the east side of the 101 Highway.

- Being in Rosella Owen's Accordion Band with Vern Dwelly and performing at various local events.

- Driving out to the site of Stafford Dam during its construction. It was finished in 1953.

- Her neighbors: the Don Donohue, Arnold Heise, and Charlie Smith families and Al and Carmen Bowman at the bottom of the hill.

- The blackberry bushes and empty lot on the corner of Machin and Grant Avenue, and then the building of the First National Bank building on that site.

- Watching the Pini Fire of 1945 from the hill on the school grounds across the

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## Board Highlights

*Continued from page N-4*

**Old Business** – Although requested, a check box to receive the E-News rather than the "Historian" did not get on the 2013 Membership Renewal Form. Next year it will be on the form.

The City is going to put a plaque up in front of seventeen historical buildings in downtown Novato. Each plaque has photos and a 150-word description. Mike Read gathered the photos and provided the information for the plaques. Tom Keena requested that the NHG be recognized on the plaques as the source of photos and information.

## Heard From Hamilton

*by Pat Johnstone*

The Guild is pleased to have received donations to fund five new memorial tiles on the Patriot's Wall at the Hamilton Military Museum patio.

Judges and District Attorneys, both present and retired, have contributed to a tile for Freddie Muse, Jr. who, after retiring from 24 years in the US Infantry, worked 20 years as an investigator for the Marin County DA. He then became a Baptist Pastor and preached for 10 years at the Bayview Tabernacle in San Francisco.

Major Charles Walton Bennett is memorialized by the family of his son, the late Charles Bennett of Novato. Major Bennett enlisted as a recruit in 1932, became an officer in 1942, and died of a heart attack on active duty in Japan in 1956. He served in the Pacific theater in WWII and with the army of occupation in Japan after the war. He was with the 483d Air Police Squadron, 483d Base Group at Hamilton as his last station, where he served as the Provost Marshall for the base for 5 years.

Dorothy Hicks donated in memory of her brother, Russell Carlton Hyde, who trained on the P-38 aircraft at Hamilton during WWII. He flew his P-38 (named "Dottie" after his sister) in the Pacific Islands campaign.

# Novato Memories

*Continued from Page N-7*

street. There were melted coins found the next day in the ashes.

- The Novato Theater was built on the site where the H. Pini and Co. store stood in 1947.

- Leo Zunino owned Zunino's Shoe Store and sold new shoes and repaired old ones.

- Ernie Zunino shutting her finger in the car door one Halloween night. He is forgiven!

- Hearing the noon fire whistle blow each day. Three blasts of the whistle meant there was a fire somewhere in the area. Merchants would close their shops to help fight the fire, and sometimes her dad was called if there was a medical problem.

- The Novato Drug Store was owned

by Earl and Pearl Johnson. It had a popular soda fountain. Pearl made sandwiches and cookies. Dr. Weseman and Paul Arp (the pharmacist) often had to confer on many things. Today, the doctor just calls the prescriptions in, or faxes them to the pharmacy. There were many shelves with bottles in the back of the drug store. Ralph Kemerer took over the pharmacy in 1950.

- The blacksmith shop (now Dr. Insomnias) was always a busy place. Seeing horses in downtown Novato was a common sight.

- Roller skating with friends in front of her dad's office was always fun.

- Tainter's Second Hand Store was a fascinating place to visit.

- Bruno Schultz was often seen in downtown Novato with raised arm and

cane trying to cross the street.

- Visiting Agatha Ryan with her dad at her ranch where Stafford Lake is now located.

- Her dad getting his haircuts at Pete's Barber Shop on Grant Avenue.

- Buying holiday turkeys at Robertson's Turkey Farm on Center Road.

- Shopping at H. Pini and Co., D'Ambrogio's Market, Simmons' Meat Market, Torassa's Bakery, Rayburn's Market and Carlisle Hardware.

- The annual Portuguese and Novato Horsemen parades.

- The firemen's picnics at Joe's Crossroads. There was a jar filled with beans and we guessed how many there were.

- Being a member of the Novato 4-H Club and learning to sew on a treadle sewing machine. Mrs. Lieb was her sewing leader. The club would meet in the club car located behind the Community House. The general meetings were held once a month and she would hear about livestock and poultry projects. Other friends (not in her class) but met through 4-H were: Virginia Orr, Dick Lieb, and Glen and Barbara Thompson.

- The Girl Scouts met in the Presbyterian Church. One day they had their picture taken for the calendar in an orchard with Hazel Thompson and a calf.

- Attending Louise Gnos's birthday parties out at the Gnos ranch on Olive Avenue. Louise's mom, Gretchen, would bake charms into the birthday cake. It was fun to see who would get a charm in their slice of cake.

- Getting a white kitten from Josie Dep and naming the kitten "Josie." The Dep family had their chicken ranch on Atherton Avenue.

- Maison Marin restaurant served french cuisine and had a Sunday morning radio program where they interviewed diners. It later became Little Sweden, then the Moose Lodge and now the Hilltop.

*Continued on Page N-9*

## Novato's Treasures

### 1009 REICHERT AVENUE

### PORCELLA HOUSE



ca. 1901



ca. 2012

Steve Porcella, the local blacksmith, lived in the back of his shop building. When the time came for him to seriously think about taking a bride, he knew he could not bring her home to his simple quarters. He built a house behind the Fashion Shop in 1897 for the sum of \$700. After Porcella

married Minnie Saunders-Hopkins in 1901, they moved into the house. Their daughter, Enid and her husband A.J. Monteiro lived in the home until 1977. Today it houses LeCut of Marin beauty salon. Top left picture, on the porch (L. to R.) are Fred Sweetser and Mr. Porcella.



# Novato Memories

Continued from Page N-8

- Swimming in the Robertson's swimming pool on Center Road.
- Getting "take out" food from the Chinese restaurant next to DeBorba's.
- Getting the new house on the hill painted by Jim, Jack, Leland and Bob Kidder.
- The Novato library was upstairs in

the Community House.

- The cheese factory on Railroad Avenue.
- The Village Inn on Redwood Boulevard and Vallejo run by Dave Crandall.
- Smith and Sjoblom's gas station on Redwood Boulevard.

• Romie and Sophie McDonald opening McDonald's Jeweler's in 1950.

- Constable Fred Nave helping children cross the 101 Highway before signal lights were installed.

*We will have some more of Fern's memories 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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# Notice

## *General Membership Meeting* *Novato Historical Guild*

**Saturday, June 15, 2013, at 1 p.m.**

**Old City Hall**

**901 Sherman Avenue**

**Oldtimers Day—No Class Reunion—Only Good Stories**

*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**