

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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January - March 2018

The Novato Historian

Volume 42, Number 1

Hamilton Field "Mary's Tree" Plaque Dedication

On January 31, 1933, a specially modified truck delivered a 40-foot red cypress tree to Hamilton Field in Novato, California. It became known as Mary's Tree. 85 years later to the day a plaque was dedicated to Mary R. Nurse, wife of Capt. Howard B. Nurse, the base's architect.

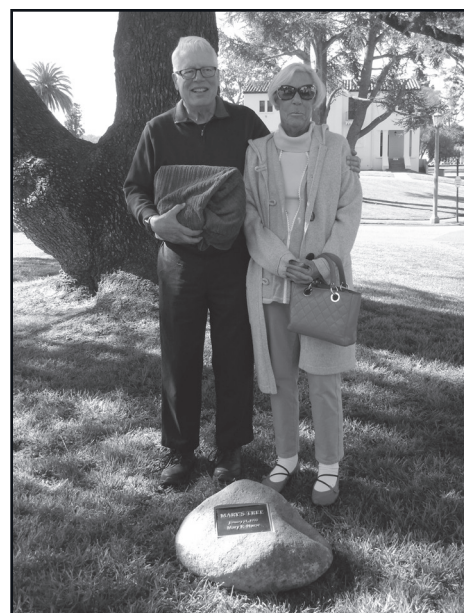
Mary Nurse was born in 1887 in Brooklyn, NY, and died in St. Joseph, Michigan, in 1978 at age 91. Mary and Howard arrived in San Rafael in 1931 when Howard began the design and construction of Hamilton Army Air Field. They remained at Hamilton until 1935.

Mary and Howard travelled the world for the Army, living in New York, Washington, DC, the Philippines, Texas, California, Hawaii, Illinois and Michigan.

Mary's Tree is located at Hamilton's North Circle. Mary was present when the tree was planted. Electrical wiring was installed at North Circle so the tree could be lighted during the Christmas season. This tradition was continued for many years.

Red cypress trees can live longer than 1000 years and grow to over 200 feet tall.

Howard L. Nurse, grandson of Mary and Howard, recalls his family talking about Hamilton Field and Mary's Tree. "Hamilton Field was their favorite assignment. Mary and Howard often spoke of retiring in Novato and had designed their dream home to build there. I was amazed to see Mary's Tree for the first time several years ago."



Dedication of plaque at "Mary's Tree," honoring Mary R. Nurse, wife of Capt. Howard B. Nurse, who designed Hamilton Field. Grandchildren Howard Nurse and his sister Judy Nurse Scheaffer attended the dedication.



The December General Membership Meeting at Margaret Todd Center. The featured speaker was local anthropologist and archaeologist Betty Goerke, who wrote a new book "Broken Propeller."

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.

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Deadline for the June 2018 issue is May 1st.

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Address Changes

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President's Corner

Jim Crumpler

President, Novato Historical Guild

What's New at the Guild

What's new with the Board in 2018? Judi Brady, the best proof reader that the guild has ever had, is leaving after two years. Don't be surprised if there are a few more run-on sentences in future *Historians*. We will miss you Judy. Hope you will continue to drop by the Museum on Thursday afternoons.

Lonnie Karste, Edna Manzoni's brilliant son-in-law, will also be retiring after two years. Lonnie is responsible for getting the Board headed in a direction to actually accomplish something in 2018 and the future. Lonnie, we hope you will check in on us occasionally so that we don't get off the track you have set us on.

Laurie O'Mara is one of two new Board members. Laurie has been responsible for the Third Grade Student tours the last couple of years. This is a huge job, scheduling volunteers, schools, buses and teachers so that they all come together. Laurie has been going such a terrific job with the "Student Tours" that the board would like her to do some "Adult Walking Tours" this summer.

Kate Johnston is the second new board member. Kate has been involved in the Board's new Strategic Plan and gives her own "Historical Walks" in various interesting places in the area.



New board member Kate Johnston.

On a sadder note the author of our "Bible"...*Novato Township*, May Ungemach has died. I'm not sure where the Novato Historical Guild would be without this marvelous, comprehensive volume of Novato's history. Not to mention the hundreds of dollars the Guild has made on the sale of this book. Thank you May!



"Novato Township" author May Ungemach

A big "thank you" goes out to Tom Keena, Rich Donovan and Bill Glass for putting up the Christmas lights on the History Museum. The City of Novato had installed the lights the last few Christmas's but this year it didn't have the resources to do it. So Tom and his pals stepped up and turned on the lights!

For those members that were fortunate enough to hear Betty Goerke speak at the December Members' Meeting about her new book "A Broken Propeller," her book is now available to order from Amazon.

The speaker for the March Members Meeting is Paul Drexler, award winning crime historian.

Paul tells the real stories of the murderers, con artists and robbers who have made San Francisco a place of fascination and danger. This should be an exciting talk, hope you all can make it.

In closing I would like to sincerely thank the 80 plus volunteers and docents for all the time they generously give the Guild. Without you we wouldn't exist. Thank you. You ARE appreciated!



Novato-50 Years Ago

(January, February, March 1968)

by Yvette Borloz Jackson

Happy New Year to our readers. 1968 was a year that was filled with many world & national changing events, some good some down right terrible. I will be focusing on how it affected Novato and it's citizens.

You regular readers know this, but all items are taken from the pages of the Novato Advance, they may be abridged, but the language used was that of the day.

- The apparent winner of the 1968 first baby contest is John Andrews Zerbe, born at 4:54 AM January 1 to Mr. and Mrs. John Zerbe of 11 Regent Court. This Zerbe baby was born at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco. His weight at birth was 8 pounds, 2 ounces. The Zerbe's fourth child, he has two's sisters – Alicia, eight, and Francesca, seven – and a brother - Anthony, 2.

- Spiros Red Vest Restaurant in Nave shopping Center now boasts a chef who was the head chef on Greek Line ships for eight years. He is Dennis Drossos, who arrived in Novato a week before Christmas after a four-year wait for a permit to enter the U. S. He is a brother-in-law of Spiro Halikas owner of the restaurant (now Ghiringhelli's.)

- An 11 o'clock nuptial mass performed on December 9 united in marriage Miss Michelle Joan Rocca and James Joseph Grossi Jr. The Rev. Charles J. Farrell officiated in Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Michael Rocca. Her bridegroom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Grossi Sr. Cecilia Butterworth, of San Rafael, cousin of the bride was maid

of honor. Bridesmaids were Kathy Marzell, Marianne Farris, Pam Saffores and Beverly Grossi, a sister of the bridegroom, all of Novato. Christy Rocca, a sister of the bride, acted as junior bridesmaid. Heidi Halter, a cousin of the bridegroom, was flower girl. Ralph Grossi, of Novato, was best man for his brother. Ushers were Edward Grossi, of Novato, a brother of the bridegroom; Domingo Grossi of Inverness; Henry Grossi of Marshall; and George Grossi of Novato, all cousins of the bridegroom. A cousin of the bride, Peter Butterworth of San Rafael, was junior usher. The Veterans Memorial Hall in Petaluma was the setting for a reception immediately following the rites.

- The weather became a major topic of conversation here this week when a long, cold dry spell was broken by a two day storm that got underway Monday and reached its height last night, dumping 2.08 inches of rain and doing some damage.

- Although the current cold snap saw that thermometer drop to 22° on January 5, this is no record according to temperature figures taken by the Novato fire department since 1959. The mercury dropped to 22° on January 12 and 13, 1963, and almost made it on December 17, 1965 when the reading was 23°. The six -day January 3-8, 1968, shivery period is no record either.

- The storm that got underway here Saturday and continued yesterday dumped 4.59 inches of rain on Novato and produced high winds that did widespread but minor damage throughout the city. A feature was the appearance of snow on the hills surrounding Novato Saturday and lasting through Sunday. Snow covered the

peaks surrounding Novato Saturday morning. The snow at the top of Mount Burdell and Big Rock Ridge, on the south of the valley, lasted until the following day. Old-timers could not recall a time when the snow had covered the hills as low & as deep as it did over the weekend. A few residents even reported that flurries fell in their back yards. Some 200 children swarmed over the slopes of Mt. Burdell to play in the snow. (01/07-01/08)

- The city recreation department reported this week that sign-ups for the latest "Tiny Tots" program for youngsters 3 and a half to five years of age will begin Monday. The newest of the tiny tots program gets underway Monday, February 5, and is scheduled to continue for five weeks until March 8. The program, providing supervised play and activities for the youngsters, is held five days a week at the Community Clubhouse, with youngsters allowed to attend on a two or three-day-a-week basis. Program fee for attending twice weekly is \$7.50, and \$10 for thrice weekly attendance.

- "TG&Y" was having a sale! Featured: Fabric Sale, "Dan River" GINGHAMS 2 yards for \$1, Assorted fabrics 27¢/yd., Bonded Knit Remnants 57¢ per piece. A Laundry BASKET(bamboo) 67¢ & TOILET TISSUE 10 count 69¢

- WOMACK'S FABRICS offered in their ad: *lawn *cotton canvas *dotted swiss *rayon/acetate rib *cotton Dacron cords *seersucker – all 45" wide reg \$3 now 99¢-- 60" Acrylic-Dacron knits- half off \$2.99 & \$3.99

- Arrests for possession of marijuana have become fairly common in Novato

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50 Years Ago

Continued from Page N-3

during the past two years. Remember how shocked we were when the first teenage arrests were made here? Now arrests are reported as routinely in the press, as acts of vandalism are. Over the weekend a student marijuana investigation was conducted in the south Novato area. What was different this time was that the parents reacted by immediately calling a meeting to determine what could be done about the situation. It is probably the first time that parents here have initiated action in this way.

- Call-up of the Air Force reservists following the Pueblo Incident involved a number of Novatans, among them the 46 local members of the 349th Military Airlift Wing stationed at Hamilton Air Force Base. For CM/Sgt. Willard H. Stell, this is the second time he has been called up. He also went on active duty during the Cuban crisis. He said the call up will not work a financial hardship on him. "The worst effect is the feeling of insecurity - you worry that you might be separated from your family." Stell has four children ranging from a nine-year old to 21-month-old twins. "My wife is understandably upset," he said. However, Stell, who served in Korea as a flight mechanic during the Korean conflict, said he doesn't mind being called up if the activation of the reservists "helps in bringing peace to the world."

- A1/C Peter and Paul Ferrarese, were working for a boat building firm in Marin when they were called to active duty. For both, the change meant a considerable loss in pay. A1/C Joseph Mc Nern, who lives with widowed Mother, had been a fireman in the Novato Fire Department for three years when he was called up. He is also a fireman in the Air Force.

- The USS Pueblo is a banner-class environmental research ship, attached to Navy intelligence as a spy ship, which was attacked & captured by North Korea forces on 23 Janu-

ary 1968> In what is known today as the "Pueblo incident" or alternatively, as the "Pueblo crisis". The taking of Pueblo and the abuse and torture of it's crew during the subsequent 11 month prisoner drama became a major cold war incident, raising tensions between the Western democracies, and the Soviet Union and China.

- Mobile home parks continue to occupy space in the news budget. On Monday the powerful Loma Verde Homeowners Association came out against the proposed Los Robles mobile home park on Bel-Marin Blvd. Its opposition poses a problem for Supervisor William Gness who has always treated the Loma Verde group very solicitously over the years. The county planning commission approved the fancy trailer park on Monday.

- The victims of the housing slowdown in Novato have been many. Both large and small developers, as well as those in related fields, during the past two years have been squeezed down and many forced to go out of business by the relentless pressure of events. Only a handful of contractors remain in Novato. The type of individual sacrificed by the tight money conditions was M. W. Finley, whose Bahia subdivision went down the drain. Both a cause and effect of the problem has been the static population of Novato for the past year.

- For the first time since it was incorporated in 1960 the city of Novato failed to show any population growth last year, according to estimates released this week by the Marin County Chamber of Commerce. The population of Novato was estimated to be 28,731 on January 1, 1968; last year the population was estimated by the County Chamber as 28,823. The drop amounts to 108. The principal reason according to Carroll Snyder, of the County Chamber, has been an 806 decrease in personnel at Hamilton Air Force Base during the past year. This loss was only partially offset by the increase in the civilian population of the city. This amounted to a mea-

ger 696. The small growth of new residence here, exclusive of military personnel, is due to the clamp down on the residential construction in the area for the past two years.

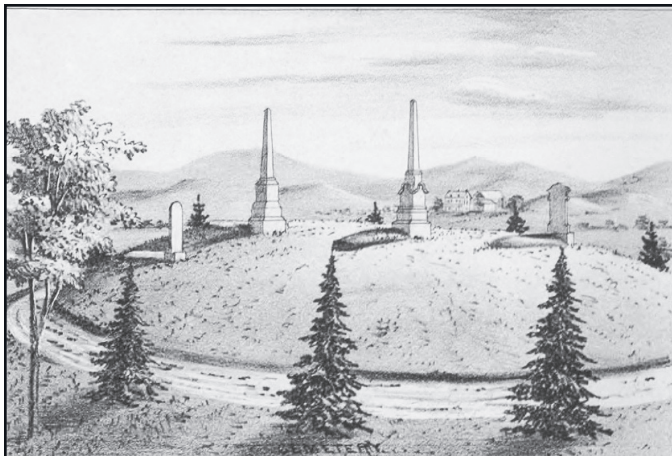
- All Saints Lutheran Church was the scene Saturday of a "hippie" wedding. The bride, Connie Bremer and the bridegroom, Lonnie Frisbee, are members of a local group know as the "Christian Hippies". The bride wore a traditional gown of white satin with a bonnet- style headdress decorated with daisies. The headdress of daisies also what is worn by the bridegroom, who's costume, of his own design, consisted of a white Indian style tunic, matching trousers, beads from India, and moccasins trimmed with bells. As the Rev. Arthur Sorenson read the marriage ceremony the wedding party formed a "circle of love" around the temple at the central altar.

I hope you enjoyed and saw some of the parallels to today. Until next time,

Yvette Borloz Jackson

NOVATO'S TREASURES

Pioneer Memorial Cemetery - Simmons Lane



1876 lithograph of Sweetser's cemetery, right after Mrs. Sweetser was buried in the cemetery.

Pioneer Memorial Cemetery is truly a memorial to Novato's pioneers. Their resting place is a monument to the history of the early development of Novato Township.

There are two spires on the knoll – one is a memorial to Mrs. Charlotte P. Haven, the first known burial on November 16, 1861. The second spire was erected in memory of Mrs. Maria Ingalls Sweetser, who passed away May 27, 1876. She was the wife of Joseph Sweetser.

In January 1899 John R. Sweetser sold lot 15 to J.W. Atherton and lot 17 to J.W. Ferris in the Novato cemetery.

March 17, 1899 Sacramento Union reported "Articles of Incorporation. The following articles of incorporation were yesterday filed at the office of the Secretary of State: Novato Cemetery Association. For conducting a burial ground at Novato. Directors—J. R. Sweetser, F. W. Sweetser, J. W. Atherton, S. W. Ferris, J. B. Burdell, Novato. Capital stock, \$5,000; subscribed."

On May 22, 1899, J.R. Sweetser deeded over the cemetery to the Novato Cemetery Association for \$500 in gold coin. A plot map of the cemetery was surveyed by G.A. Atherton and filed in the Marin County Recorder's office on December 18, 1899. Records indicate that John W. Atherton was the Association's first president.

Many other early Novato residents are buried in what was first known as Sweetser Cemetery and later Novato Cemetery. In 1958 the present name, Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, was proposed by Al Lerch, Novato Chamber of Commerce president and city historian in the 1950's.

Some of the gravesites were framed in wood with wooden crosses. Over the years the wood deteriorated, removing identification of many of the graves. Both spires were vandalized, and headstones were toppled and broken. To add to the problem, the poor quality of cement resulted in copings around plots crumbling. Weeds and poison oak were growing uncontrolled.

The cemetery was virtually defunct since Fred Sweetser died in 1929. There was an occasional burial in the old cemetery, the last one was believed to be on October 1957 when Theodore Thomas Daniels was interred in the cemetery.

In September 1964, Novato City Council members voted unanimously to take over the cemetery, declaring it "abandoned". The city's plan was to remove all the markers and put up one "sculptured memorial area". Mrs. Margaret Coady and four other residents calling themselves "Citizens to Preserve Novato Historical Landmarks" decided to challenge the City Council. In 1972, Army Reservists from Idaho repaired or replaced all the copings and repaved the road around the knoll. Their presence was covered by Bay Area newspapers and TV. A solid stone wall replaced the eroding slopes of the knoll.

In 1993 the cemetery was named a "point of historical interest" by the state.



1957 picture shows grave-stones toppled by vandals. Long unattended, the graveyard was the scene of "wild parties and other happenings,"



In October 1963, Novato Seventh-Day Adventist Church carefully replaced grave-stones in the old Novato Cemetery in their proper up-right position. But a week later, vandals pushed over the old gravestones. This picture shows what the vandals did a week after the Church finished.



Picture of the Novato Cemetery today.

Novato Memories

Jim McNern



Louise Skowronek Koenig

Louise Skowronek Koenig is the oldest daughter of the late Lewis and Frances Skowronek. She is a 1965 graduate of Novato High School. Louise and her husband, Bill, own Marin Landscape Materials in Novato. She was a teacher and administrator in the Novato Unified School District for many years prior to her retirement, Louise shares her Novato memories in this March issue of the Novato Historian

I have two very early memories of Novato that go back to when I was two years old. I was living on Hamilton Field in the housing where Hamilton school is now. I remember living there and walking with my mom to the old school south of the present school. My second memory is jumping out of my parents' car and running up to our new home on Elm Drive in May of 1950. My parents were Lewis and Frances Skowronek. At that time I had one sister Cheryl. Later another sister was born, Joanne. Our home was in a new section of homes built by Myers and Schilling.

Mrs. Myers lived in the very big and intimidating ranch house at the end of the street where the Elm Apartments are now. I remember as kids we were very afraid of trick or treating at that house as it always seemed haunted. However, one Halloween my friends and I all agreed we would walk up the two flights of stairs and ring the doorbell. To our surprise she was very nice and gave us big Hershey bars. All of us realized we had been missing out for years!

Novato was very different in the early 1950s. Everyone knew everyone. I used to walk with my dad across 101 and shop or pay bills. We would always stop in to say hi to Irv Links or

Pete Ferrerese in the First National Bank on the corner. We would pass by Ziegler's delicatessen, R & W Market and say "hi" to Martin Beebe who used to bag our groceries. At that time Food Fair was just a little store where the Wardrobe Dry Cleaners and the Vacuum Store is on Front Street. The large Food Fair that was built later was across the street from our home. It later burned down in 1961. I remember the post office being on the corner of Vallejo and Machin. The water company being in the present VFW building on Sweetzer.

A big treat was to go into the Ben Franklin Five and Dime on Grant and pick a toy out of the tables that had glass partitions separating the plastic toys. Later in life, I would work with Gary Edwards at Hill School. We would sometimes take a memory walk down Grant Ave. and test each other on what all the stores were and their location.

My dad worked at Hamilton Field. He was stationed there during the war. He met my mother Frances at a dance in Penngrove and as they say the rest is history. He later worked in supply in the last hangar called "shops." I can still hear him saying, "Wait till you see the latest jet that just came out. It's a F 104." In those days the third Saturday in May was always the day for the annual open house where everyone could climb into the jets or walk beneath a B 52. Those days were

fun having the jets zoom over town. I always loved the roar of them as they flew over us.

Church was a regular routine for our family. We always went to mass at Our Lady of Loretto where the Village Pizza is now. When I go there now it seems funny to eat in the former confessional. I can still see Ray and Alice Lightner, Eleanora Lafranchi and Martin Beebe singing in the choir on Sunday. After mass, we would always walk across the street to Dean's Rexall Drug Store for the Sunday paper and maybe a treat. Little did I know that years later I would end up working there with Yvette Borloz, Dottie Dray, Irene Clark, Patty Baseheart, Bill Scott and George Phinney. In the sixties, there were no large drug stores like CVS or Rite Aid. I remember selling cartons of Marlboros for \$2.39! Another part of life with church was the annual Fiestas that were held at the IDESI hall. It was a major town event. My dad, Lewis Skowronek, was often the chairman of the event.

As young girl, I used to walk to school from Front Street to Marion School. Seems strange now to send a five-year old off six blocks to school. After Fourth Street, there were no sidewalks, just dirt paths with a deep ditch between it and the road. There were homes along Grant at that time. Many of the side roads off Grant Avenue were not paved, just dirt and gravel

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Novato Memories

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at that time. I wasn't allowed to go to Grant Ave. School across the highway because of the safety issue.

I can still remember my teachers, Mrs. Boycoe, Mrs., McNulty, Mrs., Allen, Mrs. Tashjian, and Miss Jones, my favorite who also had a twin sister who taught at Olive School. Some of my friends were Maureen Giari, Linda Lawhorn, Pat Hogue, Lynne Walline, Larry Otis, Harry Lehman, Bobby Nelson, Michael Walker, and Susan Hatfield. Susan lived in a house where Wells Fargo Bank sits today. Her house was what is today the Miwok Museum. It was moved from the old location. Later, I would attend Hill Elementary for fifth grade and then go

back when it became an Intermediate School.

Being sent to the grocery store was a treat in the 50's. Milk cost 19 cents a quart and I was allowed to spend the penny on a piece of *Double Bubble* gum. I would go the Ascherman's on the corner of Grant and First Street which was the left side of Pini Hardware. The right side was *Tot 'n' Teen* where we would buy our Easter dresses.

I can still draw a diagram of the floor layout of Ascherman's. I do remember the popsicles and ice cream were near the front window. Another thing of that era was that meat could not be bought

on Sundays. The store was open, but the meat had butcher paper over it in the meat case. I remember my mom always making sure she had the meat for Sunday dinner by Saturday.

Every year at Christmas, the Novato Theater would have all the kids attend a free Saturday movie. I guess that tells you how big Novato was that all the kids fit in that small theater. Then we would walk across the highway and visit Santa Claus at the Fire House on Grant. We all knew it was Sam Marzell, but it was fun anyway. He gave us an orange and a cellophane bag of hard candies. We thought we had it all with those two gifts.



First Row - Rita Stewart, Bobby Nelson, N/A, Harry Lehman, Kathleen Keena, N/A, Richy Graham, N/A, N/A
Second Row - Linda Rediske, Susan Hatfield, Judy Stewart, Linda Makinson, Vicki Prarett, Pat Hogue, N/A, Linda Sparrow, N/A
Third Row - Frances Heard, Louise Skowronek, Donna Web, N/A, Maureen Giari, Lynne Walline, N/A, N/A, Michael Pechner.
Fourth Row - N/A, David Nelson, Linda Lawhorn, N/A, N/A

Novato Memories

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Easter time was another special time when the Novato Fire Department would sponsor the annual Easter Egg Hunt. There was always a "golden egg" that was the top prize. One year my sister Joanne won it. She had her picture taken with Fire Chief George Cavallero on a fire truck. That picture was later featured in a Novato National Bank calendar years later.

In the early 1950s, I remember Dr. Weseman making house calls when I had strep throat or tonsillitis. He lived in the big white house in the eucalyptus trees across the highway from us. Later in life I would have the opportunity to meet his great grandchildren when they were students at Hill Middle School when I was principal there.

I remember playing outside with all the kids on Elm Drive, Bruno and Mirabella. We would play kickball and hide and seek. At five o'clock we would all come back to my house as I was the only one with a TV in the neighborhood. We would gather around the TV waiting for Howdy Doody to come on. That test pattern that was on the screen until the show started will be etched in my mind forever. It seems strange now, but I used to walk through the open fields where East Court, George Street and Court Road are now and cross the creek up onto Novato Blvd. to play with friends who lived on Boulevard Terrace.

In the 50s, 4-H was really big in Novato. I think there were about nine or ten clubs and they all competed for new members to be the largest club. I joined Novato Aggies. Jim McNern was one of the older members and in charge of games at the meetings. I remember him leading German football in the Hill multipurpose room. It was a game with two folding chairs at both ends of the courts and a stuffed sock. When your number was called you went for the broom and tried to push it under your opponent's chair. Decorating floats for the annual 4-H parade was a huge deal. We used to decorate flatbed trucks in Pronzi-

ni's barn on the corner of Indian Valley and Hill Road. I'm sure we must have made millions of Kleenex flowers for those floats over the years. Another annual event was distributing earwig bait all over Novato. We would load up the Wright family's truck with many bags of the bait and leave them on everyone's porch.

Before the freeway was built, traffic through Novato was pretty bad. Because we lived downtown we could see on Sundays when the lights would change to allow traffic to cross the highway. The CHP used to control them on Sundays and only change the light every ten minutes or so. Traffic from Hamilton Field was heavy during the week. People used to speed into Novato until they came to the first light at DeLong. People couldn't see the light until they were upon it, so that is why there is a single light high on the pole in the left turn lane. This was so that traffic could slow down if the light changed. Check it out. It's still there.

Since there were no large tracts of homes in the early 50s, my parents thought it was fun to see model homes in the new areas in Novato. Most people lived in single homes scattered around Novato. So, when a new subdivision was built they would check

out the houses. I remember my parents after seeing the models on Country Club Drive in Ignacio saying, "Who is going to pay \$40,000 for these homes?" Even until 1971 you could still buy a new three-bedroom home in Novato for \$27,000.

Western Weekend was a big deal to all the kids in town. We looked forward to it every year. The carnival came and was set up at different locations depending on what space was still vacant. I remember it being in the Safeway parking lot one time. There was only a little farm house right about where the entrance to the shopping center is off Diablo. Sometimes it was where the DMV is and also where Trader Joes is today. There was a rodeo, breakfast, and beauty contest for Miss Western Weekend. One year my friend Linda Ferrera won. Men were put into the jail that was in the back of a truck if they didn't have a beard for the celebration. In those days Grant Ave. School still existed and we would sit on the stone wall and watch the parade each year.

Novato was special and I feel fortunate that I grew up in a small town. Today it is interesting to hear someone say, "I've been in Novato a long time—twenty years." They have no idea.



Lewis Skowronek on Elm Street in front of his 1953 Pontiac, with daughters Cheryl and Louise. Cheryl was 3 and Louise was 6.

The Coast Guard Pacific Strike Force Team

By Michael Corlett

The sole military presence left on the former Hamilton field property is the U.S. Coast Guard Pacific National Strike Force Team.

The National Strike Force (NSF) was established in 1973 as a direct result of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, also known as the Clean Water Act. The act was in response to the nearly unchecked dumping of pollution in our waterways. At the time, two-thirds of the country's lakes, rivers and coastal waters had become unsafe for fishing or swimming.

The strike teams are specially trained and equipped to assist in major oil spills, Hazmat releases, vessel lightering and salvage, natural disasters, radiation cases and any weapons of mass destruction event. This capability includes specialized chemical testing devices, oil response equipment, mini robots for transporting and placing sensors into a hazardous environment, assorted sizes of trailerable small boats and much more.

There are 3 strike teams across the country, the Atlantic Strike Team in New Jersey, the Gulf Strike Team in Alabama and the Pacific Strike Team here at Hamilton.

Nationwide, the NSF totals over 200 active duty Coast Guard, civilian reserves and auxiliary personnel. Each strike team location maintains a 12-person hazmat team that will deploy in response to any request for assistance. Each 12-person team has 4 members ready to deploy with 2 hours notification and 8 members



ready to go with 6 hours of notification with all required equipment. When deployed, NSF members and equipment are transported via military or commercial carrier depending upon response time.



A 112-foot freight barge "Vengeance" capsized off of Yerba Buena Island in 2017. Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard.

In 2017 the Hamilton Team supported hurricane responses in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Hamilton group responded to two events in the Bay Area in 2017. The 112-foot barge *Vengeance* capsized during a storm and sank near the Bay Bridge in April. On Labor Day Weekend, the paddleboat *Spirit of Sacramento*, which was being moved from

San Francisco to Sacramento, took on water and capsized near Bethel Island in the Delta.

In August of 2017, the Hamilton NSF deployed to Unalaska's Captain's Bay in the Aleutian chain. They were there to oversee and coordinate the removal of 30,000 gallons of oil and other hazardous materials from a 180-foot abandoned fish processing ship, the *F/V Akutan*.

The Strike Force Team at Hamilton moved into Hangars 1 and 2 in 1973. Currently there are 40 Coast Guard members on active duty, 20 reserve members and 3 civilians in the group. NSF responders deploy on average 160 days per year. Several of the team members live in the former base housing on the Hamilton property.

The Hamilton Field History Museum is adding an audio/visual unit to its U.S. Coast Guard National Strike Force display. The unit will feature the oral histories of previous Coast Guard personnel and their wives, who were stationed at the base. It will detail their experiences while living at Hamilton.

Come by and check it out.

Novato Historical Guild Board Highlights

by Kathryn Hansen

November 2017

City Report - IT Department has two staff members assigned to the Guild for internet access.

The City will be asking all volunteers to complete a Live Scan fingerprint record.

The City is reviewing proposed projects by community groups.

Unfinished Business:

Key Card at Museums – There was a discussion on how the key cards are working. The Downtown device is faulty and a replacement has been ordered.

Strategic Plan – Members are asked to think about the list of projects submitted for the Strategic Plan and decide what they would like to work on.

New Business:

Volunteer Appreciation - Plans are underway to hold the reception in January at City Hall. The program will be viewing the videos of the museums that were made this year. More information to follow.

A nomination for the Board – Kate Johnson has agreed to join the Board in January. The Guild is extremely grateful to have her join. Other potential candidates are being considered.

Square – Square is a portable device that can scan credit cards and give a receipt. This could be very useful for the Guild. More research to follow.

Committee Reports & Updates

- **Halloween:** the Guild had a display at the Druid's entry way and the children were given a ticket to come to the museum. Diana Gobel escorted them to the museum. 80 attended. This was the 6th year.
- **The new Dairy Exhibit** opened at the Downtown Museum.

December 2017

- **City Report - Livescan update:** The city will cover costs for volunteers to be live scanned. The city will be providing the needed form. Volunteers will be live scanned at Novato Police Dept. Information on specific day and times will be provided.
- With the short maintenance staff the city was unable to hang lights at the museum this year.

- After discussion on the constant delay in improvement to the internet service at both museums a motion was made that the Guild set a time limit on action by the city for a specific date for such improvement by the January meeting.

- The city was contacted by Sonoma Presswood Academy elementary school about possibly doing a live feed interview of a docent at the Hamilton museum.

- The city is still working with Rotary and Boy Scouts on their projects for the museums.

Unfinished Business:

Strategic Plan:

- Reviewed Mission Statement for Guild
- Reviewed and selected specific goals from previous submitted project list.
- At January board meeting decide specific jobs and time frame for completion.

New Business:

Volunteer Appreciation - Still working on a date in January depending on the availability of venues. The plan is to have a catered brunch.

Downtown Museum – The Guild will be participating in the Novato City Family Celebration on January 27th at Novato City Hall with some type of a display.

January 2018

City Report

- IT Department are working on connectivity
- Benches for Downtown Museum will be an Eagle Scout Project.
- Patio for Hamilton will be another project that is going through the approval process

Strategic Plan – members are asked to think about the list of projects submitted for the Strategic Plan and decide what they would like to work on.

New Business: Volunteer Appreciation – a list of volunteer assignments was distributed and board members volunteered.

Hamilton Museum

- Docent volunteer hours less than last year
- Off hours bookings down from last year
- Will set up the display in City Hall for the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon (Jan 18) and Novato Birthday Party (Jan 19)
- The Coast Guard Exhibit has been in a national publication.

Downtown Museum:

- Presentation at City Planning Academy
- Purchased new laptop and projector for presentations

Welcome New Guild Members

Novato Historical Guild Membership Report March 2018

Individual Membership

Victor Clark
Theodore Madias
Maureen Giari Muir

Family Membership

Willy Waschke Family

Please support our Guild Business Members:

Acme Digital and Screen Graphics
Andrew McAghon Landscaping
Bank of Marin
Goltermann Garden & Country Inn,
Petaluma, CA
Indian Valley Golf Club
Marin Landscape Materials
Marin Trophies
Marin Volvo/Saab
McIsaac Dairy
Nave Enterprises
Novato Builders Supply, Inc.
Pini Hardware
The Wright Salon
Trumbull Manor Inc. – Novato
Valley Oak Wealth Management
Zenith Instant Printing

*If you have questions about
membership, call*

*Edna Manzoni,
Membership Chairman,
415-892-9603.*



2018 Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of the Month

Margaret Todd Senior Center

1560 Hill Road

Time: 1:30- 3:30 PM

Jan. 9	July (no meeting)
Feb. 13	Aug. 14
March 13	Sept. 11
April 10	Oct. 9
May 8	Nov. 13
June 12	Dec. 11

Membership Meetings

March 10	Margaret Todd Center
June 16	City Hall
Sept. 15	Hamilton Field Museum
Dec. 15	City Hall

Guild members are welcome to attend the Board meetings. Please check with the President, Jim Crumpler at NHG1850@yahoo.com or 415 897-5705, in case a meeting has been changed.

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

**Irene Arnold
Gloria Conklin
Jesse Fuette
Richard Kunde
Libba Patterson
May Rodgers Ungemach**

MEMORIAL PLAQUE GIFTS

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.

The Guild Extends Sympathy to

Rod Arnold, on the death of his mother, Irene Arnold

The Conklin family on the loss of Gloria Conklin

Roland and Mary Lou Fuette on the loss of their grandson, Jesse Fuette

The Kunde family on the loss of Richard Kunde

The Patterson family on the loss of Libba Patterson

The Ungemach family on the loss of May Rodgers Ungemach

Contact Us

Hamilton Field History Museum
Manager: Ray Dwelly
Museum phone: 415-892-8614
Email: Hamilton_museum@att.net
<https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonFieldHistoryMuseum/>

Novato History Museum
Manager: Susan Magnone
Museum phone: 415-897-4320
Email: NHG1850@yahoo.com
<https://www.facebook.com/NovatoHistoryMuseum/>

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 | Name _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual membership | \$20 | year | Address _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership | \$30 | year | City _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron membership | \$100 | year | State _____ Zip _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting membership | \$200 | year | Phone _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, individual | \$350 | year | Additional donations? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership, joint | \$500 | year | Interested in volunteering? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1000 | year | Email address: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business membership | \$50 | year | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate membership | \$1000 | year | |



Novato Historical Guild
P.O. Box 1296
Novato, CA 94948



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YOU ARE INVITED

General Membership Meeting ~ Novato Historical Guild

**Saturday, March 10, 2018 ~ 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
at the Margaret Todd Senior Center,
1560 Hill Road, Novato**

**Paul Drexler, Crime Historian, will be telling some of the real stories of
the murderers, con artists, robbers and rascals that have made
San Francisco a place of fascination and danger.**

Come enjoy refreshments, good company, and an interesting presentation.
Guild Members and anyone interested in Novato are welcome.

Novato History Museum

815 Delong Avenue

(415) 897-4320

Hamilton Field History Museum

555 Hangar Avenue

(415) 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