



December 2020

Dr. Stanger Legacy Society

Annual Newsletter

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From the President

Dear Dr. Stanger Legacy
Society Members:

I hope each of you remains healthy and safe in this historically challenging year. Although I have had the pleasure of speaking to several of you over the phone in the last few months, I was sorry that we were not able to meet for our traditional summer luncheon because of COVID-19 restrictions. I am optimistic that we will meet in 2021.

Your Legacy Society membership is especially important in times such as these. A robust endowment enables the Historical Association to weather the vicissitudes of economic uncertainty and provides a secure financial foundation. Because of your membership, we have the freedom to plan our education programs, archival projects, and new museum exhibits with confidence.

Thank you for your membership.

Under the circumstances, this has been a surprisingly busy year for the Historical Association. Although we were closed from March through mid-October,

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San Mateo County History Museum during Dia de los Muertos celebration October 2019.



Linda Yamane gives basket making demonstration during Ohlone Day 2019 at Sanchez Adobe.

From the President continued

and closed again on November 29, our staff worked hard to retool and expand our on-line programs. We saw a large increase in electronic traffic and expanded our attendance at virtual walking tours and Courthouse Docket programs. Visitors have been national and international. Our education team has started to provide virtual school field trips as well.

We have also made progress on some exciting new capital projects. In the following pages, you will see profiles on two exceptional individuals helping us bring to life the Taube Family Carriage House. You will also learn about Redwood City's historic place as a capitol for chrysanthemum cultivation in the 19th Century and one of the families responsible for this beautiful harvest. You will also see news clippings highlighting some of our activities during the year.

As you will see, despite historic challenges, we have made good progress toward achieving our goals.

Sincerely,



Mitch Postel
President

Dr. Stanger Legacy Society Advisory Committee

The following dedicated group of top professional lawyers, realtors, accountants, investment advisors, and insurance experts have volunteered their time and skills to help the Historical Association provide comprehensive services to its Legacy Society members.

Thank you to one and all!

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Lathrop House

The San Mateo County Historical Association mourns the loss of longtime member and friend Arthur H. Stromberg, who passed-away this February.

Mr. Stromberg had an outstanding career beginning as an investment banker, and culminating with service as CEO of URS Corporation, one of the world's largest engineering design companies.

This September, we were honored to receive a sizeable bequest from the Stromberg family trust. Arthur and Freddie will be sorely missed by all who knew them.



The Historical Association is embarking on plans to build a 14,000 square foot 3-story Taube Family Carriage House on Marshall Street behind the History Museum and next to the Lathrop House. The project is expected to cost \$11.5 million of which 73% has already been raised. We expect to break ground as early as spring 2021 with completion as early as 2022.

The building is designed by longtime Dr. Stanger Legacy Society member Adolph Rosekrans. Bill Stronck, the General Contractor, is also a Legacy Society member. The following pages include stories about both men, who share their vision for the new project as well as some of the challenges and opportunities it presents. As you will see, both bring a unique set of skills and talent to the undertaking. They are also longtime collaborators with a track record of service to the museum.

Bill Stronck: Museum Builder, Philosopher and Historian by Kaia Eakin

If you think you have seen longtime Legacy Society member Bill Stronck's truck parked in front of the History Museum more often lately, it's not your imagination. He is here a lot. Although he's a history buff, the reason has more to do with his professional skills. Bill is the general contractor (Gonsalves & Stronck Construction Co.) guiding us as we plan to start construction on the 3-story Taube Family Carriage House.

Bill knows the History Museum inside and out. In 1998, he worked on the seismic upgrade of the Old Courthouse before the Historical Association moved from the College of San Mateo. He also assisted in the meticulous work of rebuilding the 1906 stained glass dome, along with architect Adolph Rosekrans. In fact, Bill's keen eye and skilled hand is behind every structural upgrade on the museum block in the last 2 plus decades, except for the Courthouse Plaza.



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His deep knowledge of the building and love of its artistry is apparent. Bill recalls working with Adolph on retrofitting the original 1906 stained glass dome. "The dome is essentially a circle in a square," he says, "there are steel radial trusses keeping the dome secure." He recalled that during the 1998 retrofit project, "each piece of colored art glass in the dome was removed" while the structure was fortified. During the process, Adolph insisted on climbing all the way up the scaffolding to the top of the dome to review the work and ensure its integrity. "That was pretty high up, and during construction, Adolph and I were impressed with the strength of the old design and workmanship," Bill said, "still, I was pretty nervous with Adolph suspended so high up. He's pretty devoted to his art," Bill added.

Bill's own attention to detail when it comes to the History Museum is noteworthy. During their work on the dome retrofit, Bill noticed that there was quite a bit of old flammable debris at the bottom of the structural columns that was completely inaccessible during construction. All day, welders were working on the



Bill in front of the History Museum.

Member Profiles

steel structure shooting sparks down the columns. He made sure his construction crew was aware of the fire danger. He required the area to be misted to keep the surrounding areas moist and maintained an after-hours fire-watch. At the time, Bill lived on The Alameda in Redwood City with a view of the courthouse dome. Each night, he looked out across the city to the dome, and made sure he did not see smoke or fire. Fortunately, the project was completed without incident. Thanks to the care, artistry and collaboration between Bill and Adolph, we will be able to enjoy the spectacular Courthouse Dome for generations to come.

Following this initial work together, Gonsalves and Stronck hired Adolph to be the architect for the design-build renovation of the historic Folger Stable in Woodside. The Folger Stable project received multiple commendations, including the prestigious California Preservation Foundation's award for Outstanding Achievement in the field of Historic Preservation in 2011. The San Mateo County Historical Association provides educational programming for primary school children at Folger Stable throughout the year.

When I asked Bill about his plans for the Taube Family Carriage House, he said, "it's a walk through the ages. When you enter the Museum, you see the 1906 stained

glass dome and 1910 Rotunda. As you walk further, you enter the 1940 Annex. We will be cutting through the 1940 Portal Gallery concrete wall to connect it to our 2021 Carriage House. The restrooms servicing the Garden Court Banquet Room will sit on the 1940 Annex roof. The new 3-story building will have a clean design that complements the legacy building it borders. As the general contractor, part of my job is to pay homage to each era, so the visitor won't be disoriented as they walk through time."

"This project presents unique challenges," he adds. Among them, is that there is a 12,000-volt power line cutting through the property which powers the whole block. "PG&E will need to move it before building can commence." Bill also notes that the compact location of the building is similar to conditions he usually encounters in much denser urban landscapes. "I have experience working in downtown San Francisco, and this project will be similar in terms of space constraints," Bill said.

I asked Bill how he became interested in construction management and he said that it started when he was a kid delivering *The Palo Alto Times* on his bicycle in Atherton. He noticed that several large old Victorian estates were being torn down and more numerous mid-century modern homes built in their place. "I used to enjoy looking at those construction sites and trying to figure out what each room would eventually be." He recalls in particular delivering the paper to the famed Stern Estate. After Mr. Stern passed-away, there was an estate sale and buyers purchased parts and pieces including the glass elevator, windows, and wood paneling. "I was sad when it was gone, it was just a hole in the ground." Later, when Bill was graduating from Menlo Atherton High School and trying to figure out a direction for a career, his dad reminded him of his interest in design and construction of buildings and estate homes during his paper route days. "Is

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Field Trip at Folger Stable.

Adolph Rosekrans: Architect who is the Family Historian

Adolph first became involved with the History Museum back in 1998 when he was hired as the architect to redesign and retrofit the Old Courthouse. Although he had previously done work for the California Historical Society and was an avowed history buff, little did he know that it would mark the beginning of a long collaboration.

Adolph may have a unique perspective on the history of San Mateo County. He grew up in San Francisco and Woodside and is the grandson of Alma Spreckels, legendary San Francisco art philanthropist who founded the Legion of Honor Museum and is often referred to as “Big Alma”. His great grandfather, Claus Spreckels, was a San Francisco industrialist who dominated the Hawaiian and California sugar trade in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was an early investor in local railroads, among other successful businesses. “I am the family historian,” Adolph says, “I collect all the information on my family and have done so for years.”

Adolph’s mother, Little Alma, bought Runnymede Farm in Woodside in 1930 when she was 21 years old and built the historic stable designed by Bakewell and Weihe visible along the west side of 280. Adolph and his two brothers John and Charles spent each summer there. The family enjoyed the sprawling acreage and Adolph fondly remembers the family’s head horse trainer who took him on trail rides and taught him many life-lessons.

When he started out at U.C. Berkeley as an R.O.T.C. recruit during the Korean War, Adolph remembers walking through the building that housed the school



of architecture and thinking, “this might be interesting,” but by then it was too late to change his major. He graduated in 1953, the summer the Armistice was signed, and was promptly shipped off to Fort Benning, Georgia for training, followed by 18 months of service in Germany. When he returned to the Bay Area, his mother was building her San Francisco home and working with Bill Wurster, then the dean of the Berkeley School of Architecture. Little Alma encouraged Adolph to pursue his interest in architecture, and he

returned to Berkeley for his graduate studies, working in the summer as a union carpenter.

As a young architect, Adolph started out building decks and kitchens and gradually developed his art. At the Legion of Honor Museum, he remodeled the Sculpture Gallery in memory of his grandmother and the little theater along with several similar projects in the old De Young Museum. Adolph has received numerous awards over the years, including from the American Institute of Architects, the California Preservation Foundation, and San Mateo County A.I.A. for the Folger Stable.



Railing on Second Floor of Rotunda.

Member Profiles

Adolph is fascinated by the variety of functions and activities that building interiors accommodate. He believes that every aspect of a building is interesting and has potential. “Even storage is interesting,” he says. He has designed conservation labs, and restaurants among other projects.

When he first laid eyes on the Old Courthouse back in 1998, “there was a huge parachute hanging in the rotunda,” he said, obscuring the spectacular stained-glass dome that was so damaged it was a safety hazard. He was captivated by the idea of transforming courtrooms into museum galleries. He appreciated the Roman and Renaissance Revival style of the building and saw his role as restoring the natural beauty of the building while repurposing its function.

A hallmark of Adolph’s design is the way he is able to merge function with form, as he did with the railing around the 2nd floor rotunda. The original brass railing was too low, presenting a risk of falls. Because it was legally deemed an historic building, it was not required to bring the railing up to code, but he felt it would be irresponsible to leave the low railing. So, he raised it six inches with a design that complemented without mimicking the existing railing. The effect is aesthetically pleasing and does not detract from the original design.

Adolph’s life work falls in line with his forebears. “My family has done a lot of building,” he says, noting the Spreckels band shell in Golden Gate Park and the Spreckels building on 3rd and Market in downtown San Francisco were both commissioned by his great grandfather, Claus Spreckels; the Legion of Honor Museum was built by Big Alma, and the Organ Pavillion at Balboa Park was built by his grandfather Adolph Spreckels and great uncle, John D. Spreckels.

Several years ago, on Runnymede Farm, Adolph noticed 10 – 12 old farm implements that pre-dated the tractor



Adolph’s farm implement collection at Runnymede Farm.

era. He began restoring and repairing these tools all designed to be pulled by horses. Later, he ran into his neighbor, Mrs. Flood, who asked him if he would take some of her old farm tools, which he did. Over the years, he has amassed a large collection of legacy farm implements that he has restored and now displays on the Runnymede property. He has donated the entire collection to the Historical Association.

This year, the History Museum was contacted by the San Jose History Park to review some of their artifacts for possible transfer into our collection. One of the items that we accepted was one of Claus Spreckels’ Brewster Brougham Carriages. Staff invited Adolph to accompany them on the tour. When he saw the carriage and noticed some of the details, such as his great grandfather’s initials and the ornate door handle, he felt a sense of familiarity. He recalled as a young boy, playing with some old carriages stored in the Dairy Barn and believes this carriage may have been among them. He could not recall when or why they left.

This particular carriage, we were told, had been featured in the 1939-1940 World’s Fair Golden Gate International
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Karen Peterson: Her family's deep roots in Redwood City's Chrysanthemum industry and Japanese Community

Recently, longtime History Museum volunteer Karen Peterson was asked to speak about her family at the unveiling of a Mural commemorating Redwood City's chrysanthemum industry. The Redwood City Parks and Arts Foundation and others commissioned a mural at Roosevelt Plaza celebrating the city's Japanese American growers. Karen belongs to one of the Japanese flower-growing families, the Inouyes.

She grew up on a Chrysanthemum farm on Valota Road in Redwood City. Karen's grandfather, Kotoharu Inouye, better known as "Jiichan" immigrated from Japan in about 1906, arriving in Seattle. He travelled down the west coast working odd jobs such as a shoe repair owner and house cleaner, learning English along the way. When he arrived in Redwood City in about 1906, it was known for its leather and lumber, but that would soon change.



Karen Peterson

Company. Although residents born in Japan were not allowed to own land in California because of the discriminatory Alien Land Laws, Kotoharu's newborn son, Hirosuke Inouye, was legally permitted, so in 1915 the family bought a 17-acre farm on Valota Road they called the Sequoia Nursery.

In 1915, Redwood City's chrysanthemums were shipped to New Orleans for the All Saints Festival. The flowers were such a hit that Redwood City became known as the chrysanthemum capital of the world. On October 23, 1927, Paramount Pictures came to

Redwood City to film a newsreel highlighting its famous Chrysanthemum industry. However, they did not want Japanese laborers in the picture, so they staged 12 white children in the fields instead.

On September 5, 1930, the Inouyes celebrated Japan Flower Day on their Sequoia Nursery property with thousands of visitors, and a speech by Kotoharu. During the depression, to help the Japanese American Community, the Chrysanthemum Growers Association of California

was formed, and Kotoharu was president from 1932 – 1941. In 1938, Karen's uncle, Hirosuke Inouye, the first American-born member



Kotoharu Inouye circa 1940.

At the beginning of the 20th Century several Japanese immigrants recognized the climate in Redwood City was ideal for growing flowers and began businesses that over time revolutionized the flower cultivation industry.

In 1910, Kotoharu partnered with Noburo Higaki to start the Redwood Nursery



Karen's Uncle Hirosuke (left) and father Richard Arimoto circa 1946.

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of the family, graduated from Stanford University, among the first Japanese American citizens to do so. In 1939, he became the president of the Japanese American Citizens League.



Karen's mother, Yoneko in traditional dress circa 1930.

On September 17, 1941, the local branch of the Japanese American Citizens League created a poster attesting its allegiance to the United States. Of course, on December 7, 1941, everything changed with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Kotoharu was arrested by the FBI the same day and did not see his family again until the war's end. Karen's grandmother, mother and uncles were

sent to the Topaz Internment Camp in Utah. The attitude of everyone in the camps was to make the best of the situation. It was a great equalizer because everyone there had nothing.

One of Karen's Uncles joined the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team which is the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in U. S. military history. Karen's parents and stepsister met in the Topaz Internment Camp and were sponsored to leave the camps in 1943 by a Chicago family who took them in. Karen's other older sister was born in Chicago in 1944. The family returned to Redwood City in 1945 and reunited with Kotoharu, who by that time suffered from Parkinson's disease. He remained the patriarch of the Inouye family until his death in 1955.



Starting in 1945, Karen's Uncle Hirosuke and father, Richard Arimoto taught Japanese to the U.S. occupational officers at Stanford University.

The Inouye family was able to reclaim the Sequoia Nursery and rebuild their business. It was a return to normalcy. The family was proud to supply "mums" to both Stanford and Cal, but in different colors. Karen has fond childhood memories of running through the flower fields with her cousins and friends on Valota Road, attending Japanese language school at the Horgan Ranch, and celebrating traditional Japanese holidays with her family and the community such as Children's Day (May 5th) and learning traditional Obon Dancing. In time, their fields changed to daffodils, irises and sweet peas, and their greenhouses grew roses, carnations, and gardenias.

By the time Karen went to college at San Jose State University, in the 1960s, the Inouyes decided to sell the Sequoia Nursery to make way for housing. They moved one of the family's former houses to its current location on Valota Road and Palm Avenue. Karen's 100-year old aunt still lives in the remaining Valota Roadhouse.

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Karen Peterson

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Karen taught Social Studies at Woodside Elementary School for 40 years, as well as serving as the Dean of Students and Director of Student Services for several years. In retirement, Karen is hardly idle. She produces and directs many theater productions at Woodside High School, volunteers with the Woodside Community Theater, and many other organizations. Karen helped the History Museum curate the Japanese American section of the *Land of Opportunity: The Immigrant Experience in San Mateo County* Exhibit in 2006. In the 2016 History Museum changing exhibit *Peninsula at War! San Mateo County's World War II Legacy*, several artifacts from her family were featured, along with an oral history from her brother-in-law.

At the history museum, Karen's annual trivia hunt is legendary. For ten years, as part of the annual fundraiser, Karen has hosted a party at the museum where visitors compete to answer trivia questions about the museum's exhibits. Each year is a different theme. One year focused on Woodside High School Athletes in the Sports Hall of Fame. Some years, she has been able to get the Woodside High School jazz band to entertain, and one year she had Woodside High School culinary students as servers.

In all she does, Karen continues her family's tradition of community engagement and support. As a lifelong Redwood City resident, her family's story speaks to the resilience and innovation of the Japanese American community. As she said at the unveiling of the Roosevelt Plaza mural, "we hope in the future, no immigrant group will be incarcerated due to their color."



Karen's uncle, mother, and grandfather in the family's chrysanthemum greenhouse circa 1940.



Visit with Yoneko Inouye at Sequoia Nursery in 1936.



Karen's grandfather, grandmother, mother, father, sisters, uncle, aunt, and cousin at Sequoia Nursery after the War.

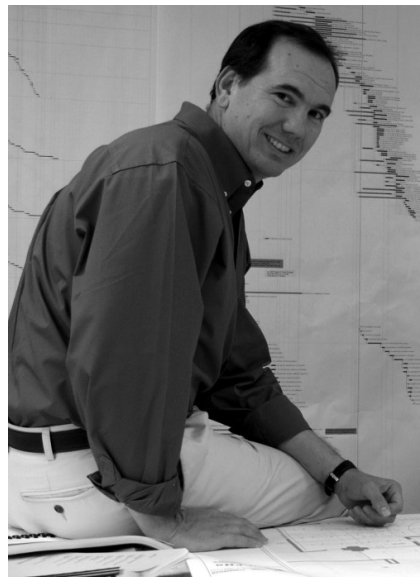
Member Profiles

Bill Stronck

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that a profession?" Bill recalls asking and decided to major in construction management in the School of Architecture at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Bill's interest in history emanates from his family as well. His grandfather worked in the banking industry during the depression and helped create the FDIC. Bill knew about this proud legacy but only recently learned that his grandfather took his finance skills and applied them to large construction projects throughout the world, including the Hoover Dam project after leaving the banking industry. He now realizes that his interest in construction may be more than serendipity.



Adolph Rosekrans

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Exposition on Treasure Island. It was part of the *Cavalcade of the Golden West*, an open-air pageant. It is unclear how San Jose History Park ended up with the carriage, however, they offered it to the San Mateo County Historical Association, which we accepted provided that Adolph agree to store it at Runnymede for an interim period. Over the summer, Adolph returned it to the Dairy Barn where he shows it to friends and studies the many design details that signify the height of Victorian luxury and function.

As Adolph works with Bill and the museum committee on the Carriage House, it seems that things have come full circle. The newly discovered family Brewster Braham inspires his work as he designs a modern glass building to showcase the vintage collection of carriages from San Mateo County's past. Maybe Adolph is more than the historian for his family; his design for the Carriage House will put the equestrian history of our region on full display for generations to come.



Adolph with the Claus Spreckels' Brewster Brougham Carriage.

Hillsborough hosted hospital during Spanish Flu outbreak

By John Horgan

September 30, 2020

You can learn something new every day. So, yes, it was something of a revelation to learn that, during the so-called Spanish Flu pandemic (there is considerable doubt where that outbreak actually started, by the way) just over a century ago, that Hillsborough, an exclusive hamlet even back then, was the surprising location for what amounted to a short-lived hospital.

The facility was located in an impressive mansion owned by the Casserly family, according to a new monograph about the flu's local history by Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association, writing in *La Peninsula*, the association's journal.

The makeshift hospital, designed to take pressure off what became Mills Memorial Hospital in San Mateo, served flu patients briefly in late 1918.

In all, the volunteer staff at the Bridge Road address served 57 ill individuals, of whom nine sadly perished, Postel noted. But that's in the distant past.

During the current pandemic, Hillsborough has yet to be tapped as a site for a temporary hospital.

And, frankly, we don't expect it to be. Heck, the current strict rules and regulations in that village clearly put the kibosh on any such operation.



Two epidemics a century apart

A truism about history unmasked: Yogi Berra was right

By Janet McGovern, *Climate Magazine*

August 18, 2020

Even non-historians know that history repeats itself. "There is nothing new under the sun," as the wise King Solomon purportedly put it. "Been there, done that?" Well, who hasn't? So about the last person who should have been surprised by Mitch Postel's recent deep dive into local history for a magazine article was Mitch Postel.

Yet there he was, the president of the San Mateo County Historical Association, sheltered in place at home because of Covid-19, researching the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 and 1919 —and colliding with an astonishing, positive case of déjà vu all over again, right out of Yogi Berra's homespun lexicon.

The century-ago masks and mask-makers. The curfews and quarantines. Schools and churches closed. Flipflopping health orders, varying by city. And, in time, rebellion against mask-wearing and all the other restrictions. A coronavirus carbon copy. And Postel, of all people, surprised by history.

"Yes," he agrees with a laugh. "I was just getting hit with it constantly," he adds, of the then/now parallels he kept finding. "...When I started doing this (I thought) 'Oh well, this was so many years ago and attitudes have changed so much and it won't be the same.' And it turns out to be almost exactly the same. I was really flabbergasted that people have not changed that much."

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Mitch Postel in History Museum Archives.

Two epidemics a century apart (continued)

Stuck at home because of the Covid-related closure of the downtown Redwood City museum and its satellites, Postel had just buttoned up a lengthy treatise on turn-of-the-century polo in San Mateo County. The story was to have appeared in the summer issue of the historical association's magazine, *La Peninsula*, which is available to association members, some libraries and for sale at the museum gift shop. But members of the publication committee thought since Covid-19 made the Spanish flu more topical, he should switch gears and write about influenza first.

Menlo Park's WWI Camp

When the United States got involved in World War I, Menlo Park became one of 16 mobilization and training camps in the nation. Camp Fremont was established there in July 1917, and more than 27,000 soldiers eventually lived in the sprawling installation that stretched from El Camino Real to the foothills. (At the time, San Mateo County's entire population was about 36,800, not including the military.)



Volunteer Ambulance Drivers 1918.

Postel knew Camp Fremont would be part of the story of how the Spanish flu impacted the county, but after it emerged with deadly effect in September 1918, cases were by no means confined to the base. The first camp death was recorded Sept. 28, the same day the U.S. Public Health Service issued a report on “a very contagious kind of ‘cold’ accompanied by fever, pains in the head, eyes, ears, back or other parts of the body.” Though symptoms supposedly would disappear after three or four days, sometimes pneumonia set in and patients died.

October was the worst month both for the soldiers at Camp Fremont and residents of San Mateo and San Francisco counties, Postel writes. Although it was apparent across the nation that a health emergency was in progress, 150,000 patriotic Northern Californians gathered in Golden Gate Park to show support for the soldiers fighting in Europe in the final Allied push.

By early October a strict quarantine was declared at the camp, and Palo Alto began requiring residents to wear cheesecloth masks. Meanwhile, cases were showing up in cities, including 153 in San Francisco and 500 in Los Angeles. By mid-month, conditions at Camp Fremont continued to deteriorate, with 164 patients critically ill and only 25 nurses available.

Concerned about Camp Fremont, Redwood City's health officer Dr. J.D. Chapin quarantined 12 residences as a “precaution” and ordered public gathering places closed. Only a week later, victory seemed to have been declared: The Redwood City Democrat newspaper reported that the Sequoia Theater and schools could be reopening as a result of a rapid decrease in new cases.

Not Really Over

Later in the month, however, new cases had jumped to 149, for a total of 250 altogether, including seven fatalities. The city trustees adopted a resolution calling for all residents to wear masks and the police chief was approaching citizens “without gauze” to advise where they could get a mask.

Newspapers devoted space to each illness and death. In the pre-Hollywood era, members of “the smart set” were celebrities whose clubs, parties and travels were followed assiduously. Prominent people began to catch influenza and die, among them the superintendent of two mosquito districts in the San Mateo/Burlingame area who was the son of a well-known, long-time ranch owner. Just 28, he left a wife and baby.

Two epidemics a century apart (continued)

San Mateo's health officer ordered schools, churches, theaters, clubs, lodges and pool rooms shut down. Burlingame did the same. Only manual arts classes in the San Mateo high school district could continue; students were filling orders for emergency surgical supplies for U.S. troops in Siberia.

The death of a member of the pioneering Parrott family was particularly upsetting. After serving overseas in an ambulance unit, Joe Parrott spent only six months at home before volunteering to go back to the infantry. After a brief bout with pneumonia, he died at the Camp Fremont hospital.

"He was a legitimate hero and just to enlist in the Army as a private from this big classy important family is kind of amazing to me," Postel says.



The Casserly mansion became a hospital.

Despite Parrott's death, the San Francisco Examiner reported that the Camp Fremont quarantine had been lifted. Most soldiers could leave the base. Meanwhile, up in Hillsborough, San Mateo and Burlingame, masks were required on penalty of a \$100 fine and 20 days in jail.

A Mask Revolt

The flu rolled up new San Mateo victims in the prime of their lives: a 44-year-old painter, a 38-year-old housewife and a chauffeur. Mask-sewing brigades sewed away. Though initially acquiescent, mask-wearers in time began to resist, especially in San Francisco, and police there started hauling "mask slackers" into court by the hundreds, Postel says. "An anti-mask league was formed and rallies were attended by the thousands."

The mask-or-else edict came down San Mateo Countywide in late October. But by November, despite some contradictory evidence including more deaths, newspapers were reporting a falloff in cases and that the epidemic was coming under control.

"By December of 1918, many in the San Francisco Bay Area believed, if not entirely eradicated, influenza was a decreasing problem," Postel writes. "That and the euphoria caused by the War ending [Nov. 11, 1918], resulted in a lessening of attention by local newspapers to the epidemic." They started calling it "pneumonia" instead of "influenza."

In fact, the flu continued its dread harvest locally until at least February 1919, though the one newspaper minimized the disease as "old-fashioned grip(pe)," nothing new. Closures of schools and public gathering places were intermittent; many parents just kept the kids home.

Summing up the trajectory, Postel says, "Around the middle of September, people were starting to get the idea that there was a problem. And then October was horrible. Well, by mid-November, people had had it. You know, 'The crisis is over, I'm taking off my mask. This has got to be it.' And then of course there was a spike in January. And then putting back on the masks and taking the kids back out of school, that became really politically difficult."

World War I with all of its privations was over. Thousands turned out for a Feb. 22, 1919, welcome home celebration in Redwood City. About 40 San Mateo County residents had died in the war, compared with 131 taken by the flu by December. But many people were just tired of it.

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Two epidemics a century apart (continued)

Heroines of the Flu

In his research, the big surprise to Postel was the heroic response of women volunteers through two emergent Red Cross chapters who stepped up to help wherever needed. The San Mateo County chapter provided over 61,000 gauze compresses, 1,900 face masks, 4,400 pairs of socks, and 3,400 sweaters, plus more than 400 “pneumonia jackets” (used either to warm patients or to cool them through tubes inside the jackets.)

The women raised more than \$118,000 and organized a “motor corps” to transport victims and ferry supplies. At mortal risk of coming down with the disease themselves, they delivered food and cleaned houses for victims too sick to cook or clean.

One remarkable society woman, Cecelia Cudahy Casserly, converted her Hillsborough mansion into an emergency hospital for three weeks. At 1 p.m. Oct. 23, her furnishings began to be moved into a cottage on the grounds. Later that night, “Casserly Hospital” took in its first four patients.

“I think it’s rare in history that you have moments like that,” Postel observes, “that there are that many people who are so altruistic that they’ll step forward and help others. ... We were really picking up statewide notice because of the activities that were going on here.”

The Progressive Era ethos that people should take responsibility for their community was an influence on these motivated women. Progressives, Postel says, saw value in government marshaling everyone behind the war effort and in applying expert opinion to combat influenza. “Doctors were saying things like wear face masks and don’t congregate in large parties. Close your movie theaters, close your schools. Do all the stuff that’s really repugnant,” Postel says. “Still is today. All the things that we rebel against today, people were rebelling against then.” People got fed up with government telling them what to do.

Despite being closed since March and losing both revenue and visitors, Postel concludes that “as much as I hate to admit it, a lot of the restrictions we’re facing now are probably necessary.” Rest assured, though, that the history of the 21st century pandemic isn’t being overlooked: People are being asked to submit their own Covid-19 stories and observations to www.historysmc.org—what they did, what they missed, what they learned as a result of the 2020 pandemic and so forth.

Surprising or not.

Photo Gallery



Legacy Lunch 2015 at Woodside Store.



Courthouse Docket with the Civil War band, 2018.

Russian cannon finds a home in Pacifica

By Jim Clifford, The San Mateo Daily Journal

March 2, 2020

A czarist Russian cannon unearthed on ranchland in Santa Clara County in 1933 — and then lingered in a barnyard for decades — now has a permanent home at the Sanchez Adobe historic site in Pacifica.

The iron gun dated 1801 that weighs more than 500 pounds is on display at the site's new interpretive center, marking the first time it has been accessible to the public since 1998, according to Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association. Postel provided the Rear View Mirror with a detailed history of the cannon written by historian Dorothy Regnery in 1972. "It's by far the best paper about the cannon," he said.

According to Regnery, a worker at the ranch at the intersection of Page Mill Road and Skyline Boulevard discovered the cannon that was concealed by a layer of leaf mold under a large oak. "When a portion of the ranch was sold in 1936, the neglected cannon was considered worth the effort necessary to move it from the field to the barnyard of the home ranch," she wrote. Regnery started her research in 1959, prompted by someone who was at the ranch when the weapon was found in 1933. The artillery piece was presented to the San Mateo County Historical Association Museum in 1964 by its last owner, Roger Page.

To the surprise of many, the lettering on the cannon was not Spanish or English, which had been expected given the fact that the only Northern California battle of the United States-Mexico war was fought in Santa Clara County. Embossed on the upper side of the barrel is the Imperial Russian Crest. "The double-headed eagle with its crown has been worn down to a pattern of smooth lumps," the history continued.

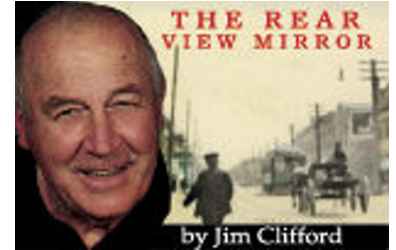


A Russian cannon found at a Peninsula ranch.

There was speculation the cannon once guarded Fort Ross, the Russian coastal outpost in Marin County, but Regnery doubted this, noting that the Russians returned all of their Fort Ross cannons to Alaska after abandoning their California colony in 1840. She concluded that most likely the cannon came from a Russian ship in Monterey, confiscated by Americans who planned to use it against Francisco Sanchez and his band of Californios, the locals who could trace their heritage to the coming of the Spanish. Sanchez, whose Pacifica home is visited by thousands every year, was an experienced soldier and his troops were skilled horsemen, albeit their weapons were mainly lances.

Regnery ends her research paper by saying that whatever theory one embraces about the cannon's origin, "it remains a mystery how such a unique artillery piece came to be hidden beneath leaf mold in the mountains on the San Francisco Peninsula."

One theory Regnery dismissed early on was the idea that the gun was abandoned by Sanchez at the time of the Santa Clara "battle." The quote marks around battle are hers and they are important because some histories of the clash make it seem a comic opera event, even referring to the clash in a mustard field near Mission Santa Clara as a mere "skirmish." One marker is flip, summing up the event with "dead none, wounded none." Was the fight that bloodless? Did early accounts rely too much on the report in the California Star newspaper of Feb. 6, 1847, that only a horse was killed? The Star boasted that its coverage was "the most correct accounting of the movements of our troops and the enemy." The account is a long one and it obviously came from the American side. At the bottom, however, and seemingly in haste, are words that may have been overlooked by later historians: "Since the above was put in type, we have learned persons from Santa Clara ascertained that four Californios were killed and five badly wounded."



Historian of San Mateo's Filipino community

By Jim Clifford, The San Mateo Daily Journal

January 22, 2020

When Al Acena, professor emeritus of history at College of San Mateo, died last October at 87 obituaries noted his many academic achievements. Among other accomplishments, his resume listed serving on the boards of both the San Mateo County Historical Association and the board of the Filipino American National Historical Society.

Virtually unmentioned was what very well could be Acena's most important legacy: a history of Filipino Americans in San Mateo County.

The history in La Peninsula, the magazine of the San Mateo County Historical Association, details the saga and contributions of a once largely unrecognized community that grew to more than 60,000, according to the 2000 census, which was two years before Acena wrote his 50-page history. The 2010 census listed 80,349 Filipinos in San Mateo County.

Early in the history, Acena notes that the restrictive immigration laws of 1921 and 1924, aimed mainly at Southern Europeans and Asians, did not keep Filipinos from entering the United States, concluding they were in "a peculiar situation: they were American nationals with freedom to move between the Philippines and the United States" but still ineligible for citizenship in the United States, which gained the archipelago as a result of its victory in the Spanish-American War.

During the 1920s, many young Filipino men came to California to work. The state's Filipino population grew from 7,674 in 1920 to 30,470 by 1930. During the 1920s and into the 1930s, Filipinos began to be a noticeable presence in San Mateo County, Acena wrote, with many employed as houseboys and chauffeurs in affluent Peninsula communities. Some worked on farms along the coast with records showing their presence as far back as 1870 when the census reported that nine residents of the Half Moon Bay area were born in Manila. Their occupations included laborer, farmer and fisherman.

Many of those who came during the 1920s and 1930s were students who worked their way through school as domestics. Other Filipinos, especially those working in farming, called them "school boys" or "fountain-pen boys." San Mateo Junior College, today's College of San Mateo, opened in 1922 and several students from the Philippines were among the first to enroll. By 1928, there were enough to organize a Filipino Club which appeared in most of the college's yearbooks from 1929 to 1937. Filipino students made the honor society, joined the Engineers' Club, the yearbook staff, the Art Club and took part in intramural sports and varsity athletics.

The students were overwhelmingly male, reflecting the general immigration pattern of the time when the population ratio of males-to-females among U.S. Filipinos was typically around nine to one. The young men, and the few women, constituted the pioneer "Manong" generation of Filipinos, manong meaning "older brother," Acena wrote, adding that immigration from the Philippines declined with the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, a situation that changed with World War II when many Filipino GIs brought back "war brides" from the Philippines. For many of the Manong generation who were veterans, family life could finally start. In 1950, the Filipino population in California reached more than 40,000. Another impact of the war was the emigration to the suburbs which for many meant San Mateo County. Filipino families were moving to the county in growing numbers as Filipino American veterans took advantage of the GI Bill's housing benefits. Daly City would become "the premiere Filipino American suburb in the United States," Acena said.

"It has been observed that the greatest export of the Philippines is not rice or sugar, but its people who have become a significant part of the global workforce," Acena concludes in his history. "In this respect, the Philippines may be no different than other countries such as China, Ireland or Italy whose sons and daughters have also scattered across the planet."



Al Acena

Redwood City Was the “Chrysanthemum Capital of the World”

By Jim Clifford

Climate Magazine December 2, 2019

The recent announcement that the Bay City Flower Company is going out of business closed the books on a story that began decades ago when the Japanese community planted roots that would gain Redwood City the title of “the chrysanthemum capital of the world.”

Bay City Flower Company moved to Half Moon Bay in 1959, relocating from Redwood City where it was founded in 1910 by Japanese immigrant Nobuo Higaki. According to the company, Higaki cut carnations, chrysanthemums and gardenias for florists in San Francisco. Four generations later the company called it quits, mainly because of the cost of doing business “nationally while operating in the costliest place in the nation,” said company spokesman Harrison Higaki.

According to the Redwood City Historical Blog Series, in 1907 immigrant brothers Eikichi and Sadakusu Enomoto started growing chrysanthemums in Redwood City and shipped them nationwide. Sadakusu Enomoto’s son, William, recalled in a 1967 interview that he and his father delivered a railroad car filled with chrysanthemums to the All Saints Day festivities in New Orleans in 1913. The shipment proved so popular that by 1920 Redwood City growers were sending 20 rail cars to the New Orleans event.

The Enomoto brothers helped immigrants from Japan to start their own flower-growing businesses, enabling them to soon dominate the field. By 1926 Redwood City drew the moniker of the “chrysanthemum capital of the world” with local income of more than \$7 million. The flower industry began to expand to other cities in the area and in 1931 the California Chrysanthemum Growers Association was founded.

The success of the flower industry in the area came at a time of “intense anti-Asian racist sentiment and policy,” according to the October 2018 issue of Historical Happenings, a monthly publication of the San Mateo County Historical Association. Local boosters promoted the Peninsula as “a flower-filled suburb” with campaigns that “often framed out the very Japanese-American working-class families whose labor cultivated the blooms they celebrated.”

Japan’s bombing of the American fleet at Pearl Harbor in 1941 proved to be the coup de grace for the industry. Japanese Americans were rounded up and sent to internment camps located away from the Pacific Coast during a war that, ironically, saw the enemy resort to kamikaze suicide planes it called “floating chrysanthemums.”

The Enomotos escaped being relocated, having moved to Utah before the government issued the evacuation order. Their property and other financial interests in Redwood City were watched over by their banker, a remarkable man named J. Elmer Morrish, who performed the same service for many of his interned clients. Kevin Kaatz, a professor at Cal State East Bay, co-authored a book entitled “Citizen Internees: A Second look at Race and Citizenship in Japanese-American Internment Camps” that recounts the Morrish episode.

“Surprisingly, not much has been written about what the Japanese-Americans were doing to actually preserve their houses,



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Redwood City Was the “Chrysanthemum Capital of the World” (continued)

property and businesses when they were forced into these camps,” Kaatz said. Some relied on Morrish “to help them navigate between their internment and what they were forced to leave behind.”

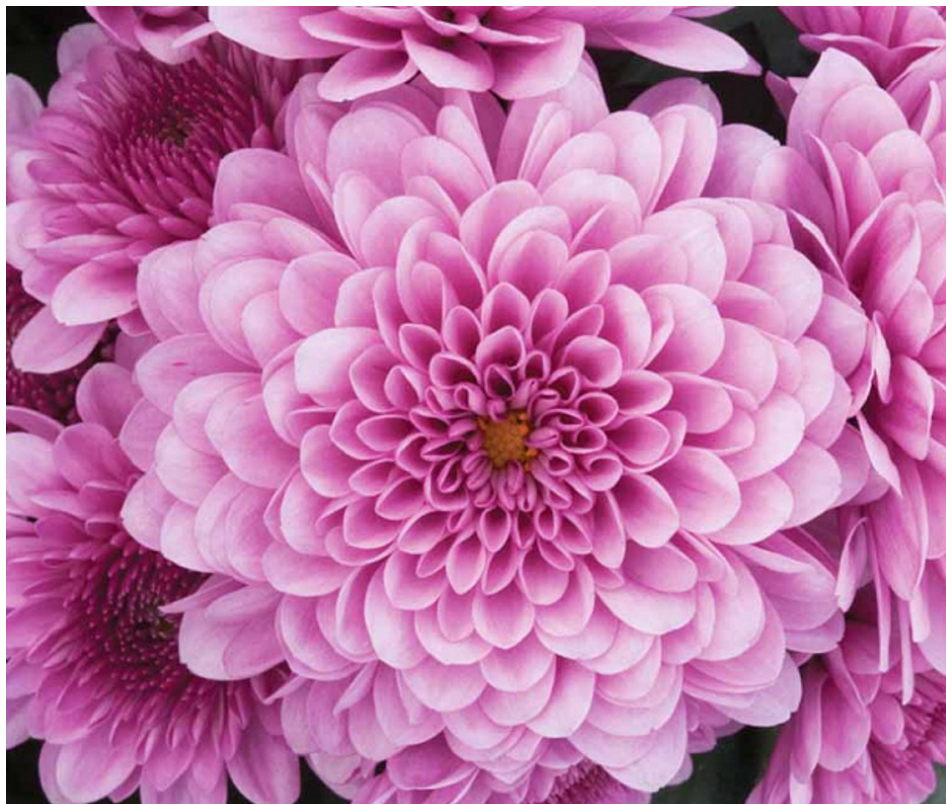
When Kaatz spoke at the Redwood City library in October, one member of the audience asked if Morrish might have had any financial advantage to gain by his efforts. Kaatz replied that he had read hundreds of letters exchanged between the banker and those in the camps and was convinced that for Morrish “it was a matter of the heart.”

Morrish, whose correspondence with those in the camps is preserved in the history room of the Redwood City main library, died in 1957 at the age of 71. The San Mateo Times reported his death on the front page. The obituary recalled his many civic honors, including being selected Redwood City’s Outstanding Citizen a year earlier. There was no mention of his helping people in the camps.

Another oversight can be seen at the post office in Redwood City, according to the aforementioned Historical Happenings, which noted that a 1937 mural there called “Flower Farming and Vegetable Raising” fails to depict “legibly Japanese American workers.”



Members of the Higaki family circa 1920s.



Chrysanthemum

How the Giannini House was saved

By Sue Lempert

November 25, 2019

As a new San Mateo councilmember, I was approached by Mitch Postel, head of the San Mateo County History Museum, to help save the Giannini house. At the time, I had no idea that the famous A.P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America, had lived in San Mateo or had a home here.

It seems his daughter Claire Giannini Hoffman who was in charge of her father's estate wrote in her will that the house be demolished and in its place a children's medical clinic built. That's because she had come to hate the Bank of America, even though she was the bank's first female director, because it had grown so far away from her father's ideals. She was afraid if the property remained, it somehow would end up connected to the BofA and her father's name would be tarnished. She had become friends with Dorothy Yao and put Yao in charge when she, Claire, died in 1997.

Fortunately, the city had an ordinance which prevented the demolition of historic buildings unless the building was a health and safety risk. But no one had been allowed inside to inspect the Giannini home. It was overgrown with trees, newspapers had collected outside and neighbors had been complaining that the home was not properly maintained. After city attorney Roy Abrams and I met with the Yaos (daughter Hilda was to take over from her ailing mother) on several occasions we finally received permission to enter the home in 1999. Abrams, Postel and I and a city inspector made the visit.

What a surprise! The house was modest in scale, not a big mansion as one would expect from the president of one of the richest banks in the world. But A.P. deliberately wanted to live a modest unostentatious life. He wanted to stay close to the origins of the BofA to serve the working man. The house did have a separate building for a stable and servants' quarters. When we entered, there was a dead bird in the living room but we found the house to be basically in good shape but in need of maintenance and repairs. Postel also took note of some original furniture which he hoped to purchase for the museum but, after a request to the estate, the living room chairs were sold to Butterfield. Despite this and numerous attempts to remain on good terms, things seemed to go from bad to worse.

In 1998, Giannini was named by Time magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of the century. We celebrated this event at City Hall because we were so proud that A.P. had chosen San Mateo as his residence. He did this to save the bank's gold reserves, moving them from the earthquake- and fire-ravaged San Francisco, to a safe in his San Mateo home. It was also a reminder to the community that his house was in danger of being demolished.

In late 1998, Postel and I and two of Giannini's granddaughters went to Sacramento before the California Historical Society to list the home on the National Historic Registry. This required support from the estate, which they refused. As a result, the



A. P. Giannini's home at 20 El Cerrito Avenue in San Mateo.

How the Giannini House was saved (continued)

state maintained the house was historic and asked the national registry to so consider it. In this way, it received the protections necessary although not the plaque outside the house.

In 2000, the impasse with the estate continued. They maintained the house was in good repair but were not doing much to keep it so. We explored with the Peninsula Social Club, a mecca of Italian heritage, to find some way to purchase and turn it into a museum. But no funds surfaced. In 2003, Hilda Yao wrote to Abrams and asked what was required to demolish the house. I knew they could not demolish but then what? They responded with a supporting document for demolition saying it would cost more than \$6 million for repairs. Abrams retired that year and the city's new attorney Shawn Mason took up the cause.

Mason asked repeatedly for an inspection to see if there were leaks in the roof but to no avail. Finally, he filed suit saying the house needed to be weatherproofed. Without any notice, the estate sold the house to a small nonprofit in San Jose which did not have funds for repairs. They in turn sold it for \$1 million to a private party who it turns out has been a caring owner.

Because of the great work of Postel, Mason and many members of the community, the Giannini home was saved!

Dia de los Muertos returns to Redwood City Sunday

By Zachary Clark, Daily Journal staff

November 2, 2019 / Updated November 6, 2019

Redwood City is gearing up for its annual Dia de los Muertos celebration Sunday evening, bringing together ceremonial altars, elaborate costumes and traditional Mexican food and drink.

Dia de los Muertos has become one of Redwood City's biggest cultural events, having grown from a 200-person affair when it debuted in the city nine years ago to one that attracts more than 10,000 people.

This year's theme is "Remember Me" — a reference to the Day of the Dead-themed

Pixar movie *Coco* and also the journey taken by the dead on this holiday to visit their living loved ones, said Maritza Dias, an organizer with Casa Circulo Cultural, which produces the event.

"This event shines a light on this Mexican tradition that a lot of immigrants and community members relate to," Diaz said. "People from all over the world come and say this event is one of the more traditional and less commercial celebrations we have in the Bay Area."

Held in Courthouse Square, the festivities begin around 4 p.m. with a performance by Calpulli Yaocuahtli, a traditional Aztec dance group. Donning colorful feather headdresses and shells around their ankles, the dancers move in unison to energetic drumbeats and in the midst of burning sage.



Dios de Los Muertos, Redwood City 2019.

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Dia de los Muertos returns to Redwood City Sunday (continued)

“Their dances are a way to call the dead souls, which are attracted to that kind of music and dance,” Diaz said.

The Aztec dancers will be followed by traditional Mexican dance groups performing baile folklórico among other styles.

Next comes a 45-minute theatrical production by Casa Circulo Cultural that depicts the journey of a dead soul coming back to Earth with plenty of singing and dancing. Local officials including Supervisor David Canepa, Mayor Ian Bain and Sheriff Carlos Bolanos will also say a few welcoming words.

As the performances unfold onstage, many will occur in the crowd as well. Traditional Catrinas with their faces painted like skulls will be in character and available for photos as well as 8-foot-tall papier mache puppets created by local artists who recently immigrated from Mexico.

There will be a free face-painting booth, numerous arts and crafts booths and local food vendors offering pan de muerto — a traditional sweet bread — corn, morisqueta, which is a beans, rice and pork mix, traditional desserts, Mexican chocolate and enchiladas, to name a few options.

Altars designed by locals will be featured in the San Mateo County History Museum and will remain on view for a week after the event. The sometimes elaborately designed altars often feature traditional sugar skulls, papel picado, mairgolds as well as photos of a deceased loved one and a food or drink they enjoyed.

“It can be an emotional event for some people. It’s a time when you remember past loved ones, but it’s not meant to be sad,” Diaz said. “It’s meant to be a time to remember the good times and memories and rejoice and spend time with loved ones in the spirit world.”

A local car group will display 15 to 20 classic cars, some with altars in the trunk.

The event will end with the signature procession down Broadway, live music and a light show projected on the museum. The event concludes at 9 p.m.

Before the Court

By Susan Cohn, Daily Journal Senior Correspondent

October 31, 2019

SAN MATEO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION HONORS LOCAL ATTORNEYS. On Oct. 17, The San Mateo County Bar Association presented two veteran local attorneys with Les Williams Awards for their efforts in promoting diversity in San Mateo County. Attorneys Charles Riffle and Peter Riechert, partners at Aaron, Riechert, Carpol & Riffle, APC, were recognized as role models in the San Mateo legal community for hiring, training and promoting women and minorities within their firm. Riechert has served as a board member, officer, and president of the San Mateo County Bar Association, and was the 2002 recipient of the San Mateo County Bar Association’s William Nagle Jr. Memorial Award. Riffle served as president of the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention and the Redwood City Senior Baseball League (ages 13 to 15).

The same evening that these two senior attorneys received their awards, one of their firm’s law clerks, Alyssa V. Daatio, received the Nancy de Ita Scholarship. Daatio graduated from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 2019,

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Attorney Charles Riffle, left, and Attorney Peter Riechert each received a Les Williams Diversity Award from the San Mateo County Bar Association on Oct. 17 at the Historic Courthouse in Redwood City. The award recognizes individuals or organizations who have demonstrated a meaningful and consistent commitment to increasing and maintaining diversity in San Mateo County at all levels of the legal profession. Tom Jung/Daily Journal

Before the Court (continued)

where she was awarded the 2019 Pursuit of Justice Award, given to a graduating student who has demonstrated a commitment to providing service to others in the pursuit of justice through legal experience, community and volunteer service, and service to the law school and other law students. Daatio graduated with a Certificate in Public Interest Law.

The awards took place at the San Mateo County Bar Association's Diversity Committee's 11th Annual Speaker Series event, at which Justice Martin L. Jenkins was the speaker. Justice Jenkins was named by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2019 as his judicial appointments secretary. Justice Jenkins stepped down from the bench to help shape California's future judiciary by vetting candidates for vacancies in the state's 1,800-judge appellate and trial courts.

Susan E. Cohn is a member of the State Bar of California. She may be contacted at susan@smdailyjournal.com.

Who ya gonna call?

Local Ghost Hunters look for things that go bump in the night

Janet McGovern, Climate Magazine

October 28, 2019

Viewed the normal way, Lathrop House is the hometown Mount Vernon, the residence of San Mateo County's first assessor-clerk-recorder, Benjamin Lathrop. Stately and ornate, this Steamboat Gothic-style mansion today commands a can't-miss-it location in downtown Redwood City following a May move to a spot behind the county history museum. Once exhibits are created and furniture gets moved back in, Lathrop House will put out the welcome mat again for visitors.

But viewed the paranormal way? Could it be that there's more than meets the eye to this house with many gables, this landmark that has been uprooted from its final resting place and relocated three times? If those walls could talk, would they be telling ghost stories?

To those who have done paranormal "investigations" at Lathrop House, the idea that it's animated by departed spirits is not at all farfetched.

"There's a lot of places that are haunted that stay very quiet for decades," says Jim Martin of Redwood City, who has been doing after-dark investigations at Lathrop House for several years. Then someone decides to renovate, he continues, and "all of a sudden, things start happening because somebody has come in and upset what they still consider their home,

their place. ... I'd really be interested in getting back into Lathrop pretty soon now that they've moved it because that's going to be a really interesting investigation to find out what effect this has had on that location."



Julie Eckert of San Mateo, who has had psychic abilities and experiences all her life, visits Lathrop House one or two times a month and got recordings of spirit voices from under the house during the recent move. "My favorite place seems to be Lathrop House," she says. "I don't know why. ... But I feel attached to the spirits there. I feel that they're attached to me."

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Who ya gonna call? (continued)

The two friends are among a small community of people who are involved in paranormal exploration, often independent of others and with differing goals. Martin, 57, who has been involved in various businesses over the years, got into the field after watching the “Ghost Adventures” program on the Travel Channel about eight years ago and became increasingly fascinated. Through a “meet-up” group in San Jose, he was able to participate in his first investigation.

He began to buy his own cameras and recording, lighting, and other ghost-documenting equipment and learned the computer skills to do editing. Martin “bit the bullet” and bought broadcast-level cameras and ended up launching his own livestreaming network, the Spirit Realm Network (www.thespiritrealm.net), which is “basically anything paranormal, metaphysical or esoteric, being that big umbrella. ... I’m really just a reporter. I just want to be there with my camera and my microphone and hear what has to be said. What’s going on? What do these entities want us to know? Why are they still hanging around?” The network, which is free to viewers but has advertisers and sponsors, has live programming every night. Followers are from around the world, especially from the Midwest and Canada.

Eckert, 59, a flight attendant, was brought up Catholic and “my entire life I was raised to believe this (the paranormal) exists.” Unlike Martin, when spirits are present, she gets strong indications — where energy is in the room or a feeling of air caught in her throat. “Everything starts to open up and amplify for me” right before a planned investigation, Eckert says.

It was Martin who first approached Helen Cocco, the president of the Redwood City Heritage Association, which operates Lathrop House as a museum; about being allowed to do investigations. Cocco, 88, was hesitant at first and told him it needed to be limited in size and kept private. “I didn’t want anybody off the street,” she says. Cocco charges \$250 for a group or \$50 per person, which goes to support operations. She plans to continue to welcome legitimate, knowledgeable investigators after the museum reopens.

The groups, usually five or six people, arrive at 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. and stay until about 10 p.m. Cocco makes coffee and dessert and sits in the kitchen with a friend and “chitchats.” Meanwhile, the investigators go through the house to see if they feel “energy.” They use their equipment and recorders to pick up messages from the beyond. Often not much happens. If the investigators get a response, they ask the entity questions such as its name and whether it lives in the house or is just visiting.

There are two kinds of hauntings, in the ghost-hunting world: residual and intelligent. Residual energy is a “playback of past events,” according to Melissa Martin Ellis’s “The Everything Ghost Hunting Book,” such as apparitions that appear repeatedly. Intelligent hauntings, on the other hand, are ghosts who “have not crossed over,” linger for various reasons and may interact.

Intelligent hauntings are obviously more engaging. Both Martin and Eckert say the most common replies they pick up from the other world are “get out” and a profane “f— you.”

One theory, Martin explains, is that “They see the house and they see us as ghosts ... like we’re invading their space just as they come in and invade our space. A lot of times, they don’t know they’ve passed on. They’re clinging to this place and it’s like, ‘Why are these people in my house?’”

There’s nothing as convincing as recorded “proof,” but to the uninitiated, the wispy images on video are nothing like encountering an actual Caspar. Similarly, listening to a recording of an “electronic voice phenomenon,” or EVP, can be like straining for ocean sounds by putting a seashell to one’s ear.



Who ya gonna call? (continued)

“They’re never going to come up to you and appear like we appear,” says Martin, who has a video of a “little creature” he photographed at Lathrop House. “.... They don’t look like real people. They look like energy in the form of a mist.” Investigators have repeatedly seen “shadow play” on the Lathrop House stairway and heard footsteps, Eckert says.

Cocco, who is a Catholic, hasn’t heard voices or seen spirits during the investigations, but one night she was sitting with a group of about a dozen investigators when “all of a sudden, out of nowhere, the table where I was sitting beside moved. It made like a half-turn. ... It definitely moved, absolutely.”

Nevertheless, she remains a skeptic. “While I am not a total believer, I had some second thoughts,” she says. “I’m in the middle of the road. I’m not a total believer — but I’ve seen this happen.”

“I’ve been grabbed on my arm where I felt fingers digging in with two other people standing right near me,” says Eckert. “And that freaked me out. It was one of my first experiences and I almost quit investigating after that. ... Then I realized it was probably just a grumpy spirit that just was trying to freak me out knowing he could.”

Years ago, while cleaning up after-hours at a café at the Half Moon Bay Airport, Martin says he saw a ramekin spiral two feet in the air and land about 10 feet away. “It didn’t scare the crap out of me for some reason.” Later, though, he did an investigation at an old inn in the Midwest which had been built on sacred Indian land. All of a sudden, a girl next to him cried out as three little plumes appeared on her arm, swelling up like a tribal brand. “That was the worst I’ve ever seen,” he says. “I’ve seen a lot of scratches, most on people’s backs.”

That is one reason why investigations should be done in pairs, Martin says. Visiting rundown, abandoned locations alone is inherently riskier, but “some of this can actually turn demonic,” he adds. “And people get sort of possessed. It’s not the safest thing for a single person.”

So are investigators playing with fire?

Martin, who attends a Christian church in Redwood City, says that’s a common question and one he has wrestled with. He believes he has not been attacked because he is protected by his faith, and communicating with spirits reinforces his belief that they must be speaking from a kind of purgatory. “It’s more reaffirmed my belief,” he says. “It hasn’t taken me away from anything. If anything, it has added to it.”

Both Martin and Eckert say they’ve seen paranormal manifestations that were startling, as well as some that were more unsettling.

People nowadays generally aren’t skeptical about supernatural phenomenon the way they once were, according to Martin and Eckert. “It’s just a matter of I guess whether you’ve had an experience or not,” she says. “I think the people who haven’t had one say it’s not true.” Clearly not in that category, she finds investigations “the most fascinating thing in the world, to be able to have someone talk to you who you can’t see. To me, it’s one of the most exciting things out there that proves to me



The Lathrop House is moved to the Museum Block, May 2019.

Who ya gonna call? (continued)

beyond a shadow of a doubt that that does exist and that these people do exist. And I'm just curious to see what evidence you can get (on her recordings.)"

Perhaps surprisingly, Redwood City's Civil War-era Union Cemetery isn't the happy haunting ground one might assume it would be. "Reports of haunted cemeteries are much less common than those of specter-plagued houses," according to author Ellis.

Ellen Crawford, president of the Historic Union Cemetery Association, has ushered a half dozen investigation groups through the cemetery on Woodside Road over the years. Nobody she has observed has seemed to find much. One group brought a box that "just sort of spewed out words," one of which was allegedly "teacher." Crawford took them to the grave of James Van Court, a music teacher and photographer. "They felt something warm on the ground," she says. She didn't.

Nonetheless, Crawford doesn't disparage their efforts, figuring that if the spirits at Union Cemetery are conscious and communicating, "They are happy to have us here ... I have a warm, fuzzy feeling for these people."

Union Cemetery volunteers plan a Halloween-themed tour of the cemetery, tentatively scheduled for 10 a.m. Oct. 26. "We don't do spooky stuff," Crawford says. "We do gruesome stuff," which means a blood-and-guts recounting of some of the gorier Union Cemetery deaths that made the pages of early-day Redwood City newspapers. For information, go to historiunioncemetery.com.

New center opens at Sanchez Adobe site in Pacifica

Ohlone Day celebration next weekend to include ribbon-cutting

By Zachary Clark, Daily Journal staff

October 25, 2019

A new interpretive center honoring the first periods of California history will be unveiled at the Sanchez Adobe site in Pacifica in a ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 26, which is also Ohlone Day.

Ohlone Day is an annual celebration of Ohlone Indian heritage and culture, and the day's program is part of the countywide commemoration of the first sighting of the San Francisco Bay by those on the Portola expedition 250 years ago.

Located at 1000 Linda Mar Blvd., the new 2,500-square-foot building will be home to classrooms and an exhibit gallery with displays on the first people to live on the site. That includes the Ohlone, who created a settlement there called the village of Pruristac more than 550 years ago, Spanish explorers established a mission outpost on the site in the late 18th century, and then the Francisco Sanchez family, which lived there during California's Mexican era in the mid-19th century. The adobe house in which they lived, which exists today, was built between 1842 and 1846.

"This is our salute to the people who were first there," said Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association, which manages the site. "Their story shouldn't be forgotten. They had civilization and a history of their own that we're looking at and honoring."

The \$2 million building was funded by San Mateo County and, along with other site improvements, has been contemplated for decades, Postel said. It includes two classrooms that will allow the San Mateo County Historical Association to accommodate about 7,000 students



Reuters The new, 2,500-square-foot interpretive center at the Sanchez Adobe site in Pacifica. The building will be home to classrooms for educational after school programs as well as exhibit space dedicated to first people to live on the site.

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New center opens at Sanchez Adobe site in Pacifica (continued)

a year in its popular after-school program — twice as many students as it serves today. That program includes a variety of hands-on experiences reminiscent of “old” California during Mexican times, including making adobe bricks, grinding corn, using a reata (rope) and making candles, according to a press release.

“For us to double up on classes will be a big benefit for the schools of San Mateo County,” Postel said.

The center’s roughly 1,000 square feet of exhibit space unfortunately will not be completed by Oct. 26, but will eventually include displays on the few dozen people who lived at Pruristac before the Spanish arrived, Spanish exploration and the creation of a mission outpost on the site and the life and times of the Sanchez family.

The exhibit will feature a large-scale and detailed painting of Pruristac and another of the site in the 1790s as well as a feather headdress and cape that would have been worn at the time. Artifacts from each of those first three periods of California history will also be on display, including a mortar and pestle and other tools plus an 1803 cannon. The cannon was confiscated off a Russian ship to be used by American Marines against Francisco Sanchez and his band of rancheros and vaqueros during the winter of 1846-1847, while the Mexican-American War was raging, Postel said. The cannon sat underground for 100 years before it was discovered in the 1950s. It hasn’t been accessible to the public since 1998 and will be permanently on display at the interpretive center, Postel added.

The Oct. 26 festivities begin at 10:30 a.m. with Ohlone basket weaving and clapper sticks demonstrations followed by the ribbon cutting a couple of hours later. There will also be scholarly presentations by Ohlone people about their history and the effects of Spanish colonization. One of those speakers is Linda Yamane, who is responsible for the aforementioned painting of Pruristac and some of the crafts demonstrations.

A second phase of the project is expected to be complete within a year, Postel said. For that project, the Adobe Sanchez house will be furnished exactly how it was when the Sanchez family lived there in the mid-19th century. A historian has been hired to come up with an authentic furnishing plan and procure the appropriate artifacts. Postel said he initially thought the home would have to be furnished with facsimiles, but discovered the California Parks System has plenty of authentic ones in storage that can be used.



Making Adobe bricks at Sanchez Adobe field trip.

Downtown Redwood City Hometown Holidays

October 24, 2019 • Updated on October 24, 2019 nbcbayarea.com

Get in the holiday spirit and join the festivities as Redwood City's Downtown Business Group throws Hometown Holidays, a party to celebrate the holiday season, RAIN OR SHINE! Guests can enjoy a parade, live entertainment, carnival rides, SNOW, Santa Claus photos, food and craft vendors, and more! Admission is free, but there is a charge for rides, craft, and food vendors.

Don't miss the celebration that includes the Annual City Hall Tree Lighting on the corner of Hamilton and Broadway at 5:45PM, free admission to the San Mateo County History Museum, and Caltrain's Holiday Train toy collection train. It will arrive at Redwood City's Sequoia Station train platform at approximately 6:10pm. Glowing with thousands of lights and holiday decorations, the Holiday Train arrives with Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Frosty and the gang. Bring a new, unwrapped gift to donate to the Holiday Train Toy Drive.



Sequoia High Once Home to Gilded Age Carriage House

Jim Clifford, Climate Magazine

October 3, 2019

Plans to build a carriage museum at Courthouse Square are barely out of the starting gate. Still, the dream is enough to awaken memories of a lavish carriage house that once stood on the Sequoia High campus, an imposing reminder of America's Gilded Age, a time when the rich flaunted their wealth.

The two-story carriage house wasn't much to look at in 1958 when it was designated a firetrap and torn down, but in its heyday, it was truly an imposing landmark. The carriage house built by Moses Hopkins, the brother of railroad tycoon Mark Hopkins, was home to not only horses and carriages but also the grooms who took care of them. The stables were in the back while the custom-built carriages were in the front. "Sequoia graduates prior to 1958 have fond memories of that grand structure which looked like anything but a barn," a term many students used to describe the building when it started showing its age, Redwood City Tribune columnist Otto Tallent wrote in 1978, exactly a century after the carriage house made its debut.

When Moses Hopkins died, the property was sold to William Dingee, the so-called "cement king." Under the Dingee regime, a specialist was imported from Italy to paint over plaster walls to make them resemble finely grained wood. The interior featured full-length mirrors, marble sinks and a fireplace. Dingee made sure the redecorated carriage house garnered headlines. A great social event was made of the 1905 public reopening of the fashionable showplace. The equivalent of \$71,000 of today's dollars was spent on the bar and decorations alone. One report said Dingee owned about 200 horses, including race horses. There was a race track located west of Elwood Street, territory that was also used as a pasture. Dingee's wife seemed more interested in hosting parties than in horse racing. She gave dances in the stables where the floor was so highly polished people could see their faces reflected. Mrs. Dingee insisted the horses wear rubber boots when walking on the floors.

A year after the big party, the great earthquake of 1906 devastated the Dingee estate. The carriage house was the lone building remaining from the original Hopkins days. The land that now makes up the high school campus was bought by school officials in 1920 for \$80,000. By that time the property had passed into the hands of noted San Francisco architect Albert Pissis. Redwood City quickly passed a school bond to gain ownership of the land and build the high school. At one time, the carriage house was used as the mechanical arts building and later a maintenance headquarters filled with discarded equipment. Concrete entry paths, planting beds and decorative benches located in front of the school's main building remain as reminders of the Dingee years.

When the carriage house was demolished in 1958, the high school newspaper, then called the Sequoia Times, ran a special edition with the headline: "Historic Barn Falls After 80 Years." The reporter labeled the carriage house "the last link" to Redwood City's lumbering days: "The historical and picturesque carriage house on the Sequoia campus met its fate in the form of iron-teeth clamps and crowbars of a wrecking company."

What goes around comes around, however. Redwood City's future envisions a carriage museum that will house 33 horse-drawn carriages, most of them in storage for decades. If all goes well, the carriages would be displayed in a three-story, 40,000 -square-foot structure to be part of the San Mateo County History Museum.

"This is our thinking and there's miles to go," said Museum President Mitch Postel. Postel said the display will include nine Brewster carriages, a brand considered among the finest in the world. Unfortunately, Postel told Climate, none of the museum's vast collection includes carriages that belonged to Hopkins or Dingee.



A 19th century carriage on exhibit at the San Mateo County History Museum.

Government center takes shape in Redwood City

Emergency operations center opens doors amid Redwood City facility upgrades

Anna Schuessler, Daily Journal staff

September 19, 2019

Those who are familiar with them know capital improvements and infrastructure projects can take years to plan, vet and build.

With an increasingly complex regulatory environment and fluctuating construction costs, projects as seemingly simple as a traffic signal or as complicated as a bridge over a protected watershed can take months and years to come to fruition.

It's a reality that's not lost on those working within the San Mateo County Project Development Unit, a small team coordinating more than a handful of seminal building projects throughout San Mateo County. Including a new County Office Building under construction in the heart of Redwood City, an upgrade of the San Mateo Medical Center campus in San Mateo and a new animal shelter at Coyote Point

Recreation Area in San Mateo, among several other major projects, the slate of capital projects the Project Development Unit, or PDU, oversees is expected to cost more than \$500 million in total.

Having worked with the PDU since it was formed in 2016 to manage ground-up capital projects, Adam Ely, the PDU's director, has seen the projects from their incipient stages to the moments when the unit can welcome employees to their new workplaces. The team was able to share one such moment during the Wednesday ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new Regional Operations Center at 501 Winslow St. in Redwood City. Located in the San Mateo County government center in downtown Redwood City, the \$64.5 million project will serve as a home to the county's 911 dispatchers, an emergency operations center and a secure data center.

Also deputy county counsel with the San Mateo County Counsel's Office, Ely took the reins in May from former PDU Director Deborah Bazan, who still consults for the unit. With a background in construction law, Ely has been involved with numerous requests for proposals, contracts and negotiations in the years since he's worked on the PDU's many projects, and noted that seeing the projects come to completion makes the many details involved in their planning and design worth it.

"It's very exciting and just a bit of a relief to see them finished and ready to roll," he said. "I'm looking forward to seeing all the users in [the Regional Operations Center]." Expected to give 911 dispatchers who currently work in the basement of the Hall of Justice a new home across the street, the new Regional Operations Center, or ROC, is one of several projects aimed at upgrading aging facilities, noted Ely and Sam Lin, the PDU's assistant director. They described the bulk of the PDU's work as once-in-a-generation projects that will replace existing facilities more than 70 years old.

Other projects

Though the ROC is set to welcome new workers come fall, two other construction projects and an effort to move a historic house across Marshall Street are in various stages, and, together, are set to transform the San Mateo County Government



San Mateo County held a ribbon cutting ceremony for there Regional Operational Center which will house the 911 dispatchers and emergency services. From left: Debbie Bazan, former Project Development Unit head; Supervisor Warren Slocum; Human Resources Director Rocio Kiryczun; Supervisor Carole Groom; Public Works Director Jim Porter; Supervisor Dave Pine; Sheriff Carlos Bolanos; Supervisor David Canepa; County Manager Mike Callagy; Adam Ely, director of PDU; and Public Safety Communications Director Dan Belville. Nick Rose/Daily Journal

Government center takes shape in Redwood City (continued)

Center. Ely said an effort in May to relocate the historic Lathrop House from its former location on the eastern side of Marshall Street to a new location adjacent to the back of the San Mateo County History Museum went very smoothly, with crews to put the finishing touches on the historic building in September.



Interior of San Mateo County History Museum on Courthouse Square, upstairs Rotunda.

Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association, has said previously that the museum is hoping to offer entrance into the history museum, the Lathrop House and a building the association plans to build to display the museum's carriage collection, with one admission ticket in the future.

The Lathrop House relocation project made way for the demolition of buildings holding the county's traffic and small claims courts and a credit union in May, and crews are in the process of driving piles into the ground in preparation for the new County Office Building 3, or COB3, said Lin. Designed to let a lot of natural light into the building and offer open space where visitors to downtown Redwood City can gather and spend time outside, COB3 is

also slated to include enclosed pavilions where farmers' markets, weddings and movie screenings can be held, among other events, noted Lin.

Public promenade

The five-story building is estimated to cost more than \$150 million and is expected to house approximately 600 county employees, some 300 of which are currently working at the San Mateo Medical Center campus. With a completion date set in 2022, one of the last phases of the COB3 project will be the creation of a public promenade along a portion of Hamilton Street and landscape enhancements, noted Lin, who added the desire for more green space in Redwood City was incorporated in the building design.

"In Redwood City, there's not much green space," he said. "It's a really good amenity for Redwood City and for the whole county."

Lin said crews working on a 1,022-space parking garage where a parking lot for jurors once stood are aiming to have the new, seven-level parking structure ready for use by the end of 2020. Designed so the ground-floor of the structure can be converted into retail space if the spaces aren't needed in the future, the parking garage will also be equipped with 60 electric vehicle charging spaces and the capacity to add another 60 electric vehicle charging spaces if there is demand for them, he said.

Ely said a project to build a new San Mateo County animal shelter at Coyote Point in San Mateo has progressed smoothly, with wood framing and the roof truss system completed and completion of the second phase of the project slated for May of 2020. Expected to replace an aging facility more than 60 years old on the same parcel at 12 Airport Blvd., ground broke on the new building in 2017.

Medical Center

A campus upgrade of the San Mateo Medical Center is already in the works with the renovation of a nursing wing and central plant and demolition and replacement of a 1950s-era administrative building. Plans to consolidate the morgue and

continued on next page

Government center takes shape in Redwood City (continued)

Coroner's Office at the campus are being incorporated in the upgrade project, which is currently underway and is estimated to be completed in 2022.

For Bazan, the opportunity to see the ROC open after years of planning marked a proud moment for her and the many county departments that collaborated to create a new home for the county's 911 dispatchers and Office of Emergency Services as well as a central location where county and city officials can coordinate emergency response in the event of a disaster.

"It's just an amazing milestone," she said. "It's also a great depiction of the county coming together for the community to construct this needed asset."

Photo Gallery



Golden Circle Dinner in Courtroom A.



Story time at Free First Friday program, Summer 2019.



A view of the proposed Brewster Level of the Taube Family Carriage House.

Our Mission: To inspire wonder and discovery through education about the cultural and natural history of San Mateo County.



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