

# Millbrae Life & Times

M I L L B R A E   H I S T O R I C A L   S O C I E T Y   N E W S L E T T E R

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Historical Spotlight	1
President's Report	1
Vice-President's Message	3
MHS Field Trip	3
Curator's Report	5
Train Museum News	5
Calendar of Events	6

## HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT:

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY MILLBRAE!

BY TOM DAWDY



Millbrae celebrated its 70th birthday this year on January 14th without much fanfare. As you look back on history of our little town, we have had many events since 1948 to celebrate Millbrae birthdays. In 1958, Millbrae had a lot to celebrate for its 10-year anniversary. Many civic infrastructure projects were completed just prior to 1958, and Millbrae celebrated all of them that year. There was our brand new **Sewage Treatment Plant**, a new municipal water system serving the entire City (there had been seven independent water systems), the new **Fire and Police Stations**, and of course our new **Millbrae City Hall** that had its grand opening in January 1958 with a parade ending up at the entrance.

Fast forward to 1973 when Millbrae was turning 25 years young, and there were many celebrations that year, especially with our new **Millbrae Historical Society**. Not long after, in 1976, it was the Bicentennial year of our nation, and Millbrae formed its own **Bicentennial Committee**. One of the first things the Committee accomplished was the creation of a time capsule, which was buried in front of City Hall with items relating to then-current times in Millbrae. The capsule is scheduled to be opened in the year 2076. This was not the only time capsule buried in Millbrae. In 1996, **Stewart Rugles** buried ten capsules in the **Millbrae Avenue Overpass** during its construction. These tightly-sealed capsules were filled with argon gas to preserve them for over 100 years. In addition, somewhere on the grounds of Taylor Middle School is a time capsule

(continued on Page 4)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JOHN MUNIZ

The **Carriage House Grand Opening and Dedication** was held in front of a packed audience on August 4, 2018. The parking lot in front of the Carriage House was closed to parking. The **Central County Fire Department** brought an engine, and the **San Mateo County Sheriff's Department** brought their armored vehicle. **Group Four Architecture**

displayed information about the Recreation Center Restoration, the **Millbrae Library** provided the book-mobile and large blocks to entertain the kids, and the **San Francisco Banjo Band** played the old standards for two hours.

Now, Millbrae has three museums we can all be proud of! Two of the museums are over 110 years old. The Carriage House houses the only



color photographs of the **Mills Mansion**, a **Joltin' Joe DiMaggio** autographed baseball, part of the suspension cable from the **Golden Gate Bridge**, the only color photograph of the old **16 Mile House**,

(continued on Page 2)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



a first edition copy of ***Gone with the Wind*** by Margaret Mitchell. It also features an extensive antique camera display. If you are interested in the now-gone Millbrae Fire Department, we now have a display case full of firefighting memorabilia. We are very proud of the new **Alma Massolo Memorial Plaque**, dedicated to our beloved Millbrae Museum Curator of 21 years. You did good Alma!

Without the dedication and conviction of our members and the Historical Society Board of Directors and Trustees, the Carriage House would not have been possible. Thank you to the Millbrae Historical Society for giving Millbrae such a beautiful gift.

Best wishes,

**John Muniz**

Millbrae Historical Society President





## VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### PAUL LARSON

Greetings Trustees, members and friends,

Recently I was searching through various videos on YouTube and came across an interesting **Movietone Newsreel** shot in 1929 with sound featuring the old **Pacific Avenue Cable Car Line** in San Francisco. It was the last of that type of two-part cable car consisting of a "Grip Car" (dummy) and "Trailer". The Pacific Avenue Cable Line, affectionately known as **The Kiddies Delight**, was officially legislated out of business when the **Board of Supervisors** voted to abandon the line (considering it obsolete) in the name of progress. The line ceased operation on November 29, 1929, after 48 years of faithful service. This loss, along with the elimination of the similar **Sutter Street Line**, gave birth to the movement that saved the remaining cable car lines (California Street, Powell/Hyde Streets, and Powell/Mason Streets) decades later. To watch the video, go to YouTube and search for "San Francisco Cable Cars 1929

The End of the Pacific Avenue Line" or go to the Market Street Railway website at: [www.streetcar.org/incredible-film-cable-cars-on-pacific-ave-1929](http://www.streetcar.org/incredible-film-cable-cars-on-pacific-ave-1929). Shown here is a photograph of that unique and beloved type of cable car from the Sutter Street Line. We are lucky for that Movietone film crew and their footage now preserved for us to enjoy.

Have a wonderful fall season, and all my best to you, your family and loved ones.

From MHS 1st VP Paul Larson



## MHS FIELD TRIP TO COLMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

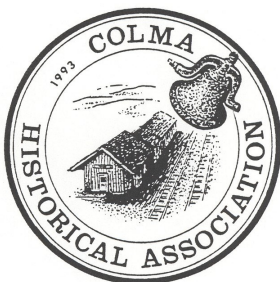
All are welcome to join this year's MHS field trip to the Colma Historical Association's Museum, Train Depot, and Blacksmith Shop, followed by a group lunch at *Black Bear Diner*. Grab a friend and come enjoy a fun outing!

**Wednesday, October 17 10:00 am to 2:00 pm**

Meet at Millbrae Museum at 10:00 am for carpooling to Colma

Please RSVP to **Joe Teresi** at **455-4887** by Wednesday, October 10

Participants will be responsible for the cost of lunch.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MILLBRAE! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Buried under a tree in the 1950's.

The Bicentennial Committee was active for several years. On Sept 17, 1987, the City of Millbrae proclaimed it as **US Constitution Day** in honor of the 200th anniversary of this honored document. **Victor Graff** was named the



*MPD Group shot for Millbrae's 25th Anniversary (1973)*

City's Bicentennial Coordinator, and a five-year calendar of events was approved. The Millbrae Government Center was renamed **Constitution Square**. In January 1988, Millbrae celebrated its 40th birthday, and the following April there was a big parade and community picnic to celebrate the inaugural of **President George Washington**. The following year, Millbrae held an **Admission Day Ball** on September 9, 1990 to celebrate California's admission to the Union as the 31st state. Finally, the **Bicentennial Ball** was held on December 15, 1991, celebrating the ratification of the Bill of Rights.



*Millbrae's Bicentennial Committee, Mayor Matt Boxer chair and Victor Graff Bicentennial Coordinator*

In 1998, the City of Millbrae celebrated its golden anniversary as it turned 50 years old. I was fortunate to serve on the committee that planned a whole year of events to celebrate the milestone. Some of the events held that year were a big parade (of course), a community birthday party, and an anniversary gala ball. Millbrae resident **Pam Donkin** wrote a special Millbrae song that was performed at many events that year. There was also a Millbrae photo contest and a contest to identify "50 reasons to live in Millbrae". Personalized brick pavers were sold and set in front of City Hall, and a **Founders Day Luncheon** took place. A "Millbrae Birthday" theme was featured during other events throughout the year.

So when is the next big celebration? I would speculate that it will occur on Millbrae's 75th Birthday in 2023. I know this seems like a long time away, but time definitely does fly. Next up is the "big one". Millbrae will be celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2048. I would be 100-years-old that year, so more than likely will not be present for the festivities and will leave it up to the Millennials to carry it out for us.



*Millbrae Mayor Mark Church and (1998)  
Mosta Malta Mayor Nazzareno Vassallo  
cutting Millbrae's 50th Birthday Cake*

On October 6th at the **Magnolia of Millbrae** there will be a celebration of our new Sister City - **Hanyu, Japan**. The **Sister Cities Commission** will coordinate a celebration for the City of Millbrae turning 70 years old, and I heard a rumor that there might be a Birthday Cake!



## CURATOR'S REPORT

DOROTHY SEMKE

Following our very successful and enjoyable 4th of July celebration, August started out with a big bang. The long-awaited opening of our newly-completed **Carriage House** on August 4th was truly a beautiful event. Most of the thanks have to go to our **President John Muniz**. He definitely made it a beautiful day for all of us to long remember. On August 11th, we followed the dedication of the Carriage House with our annual **Yard Sale**, held along with the **Millbrae Library Book Sale**. The weather worked in our favor, making it a lovely day to shop.

Thanks to our workers **John Muniz, Paul Larson, Kody Semke, Gloria Borruso, Mary Vella Treseler, Marge Colapietro, Caroline Cannizzaro, Cathy & Dan Quigg, Gaetane Andrews, Alicia Espinoza, Val Dambrosio, Tom Dawdy, Ann Schneider, Helen & George Habeeb, Shari & Joe Teresi, Vern Bruce, Eunice Danli, & Marlene McBride**, we can say it was the most successful Yard Sale ever! Of course the biggest thanks go to those who donated merchandise and those who came to buy.



With the moving of some of our Museum items to the Carriage House, you may want to visit the Museum between 12 noon and 4 pm on Saturdays to see new items such as a beautiful display of crystal in the Dining Room given to us by the estate of **Vivian & John Bowers**.

**Dorothy Semke**  
Millbrae Museum Curator

## TRAIN MUSEUM NEWS

ELIZABETH FURBER, EDITOR  
VERN BRUCE, REPORTER

Our museum has received an extensive, professional clean-up of the exterior of the building and grounds. On September 16th, a Caltrain crew arrived at 7:00 am and washed the walls and concrete around the building. It looks great now!

We are also in the process of replacing the steps on the north entrance to the **Civic Center** railcar. After years of use, some of the steps rotted out. We are replacing them one-by-one, starting with the worst ones.

We have to congratulate two of our younger volunteers for their after-high-school graduation endeavors. **Jason Brady** has enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and started basic training in June. He will undoubtedly serve well protecting us. **Joseph Bonavia** left for MIT (that's right, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in August. We're sure he made it in because of his wonderful experience gained at the Train Museum!



Once again thanks to our docents and other volunteers for the countless hours of time and service to our museum: **Joseph Bonavia; Jason Brady; Vern Bruce; Ralph Domenici; Charley Hegarty; Richard Kennedy; Jay King; Gino & Gerry Micheli; Jorge Quezada; and Peter Sheerin**.

Please patronize our Millbrae Historical Society Lifetime Business Members:



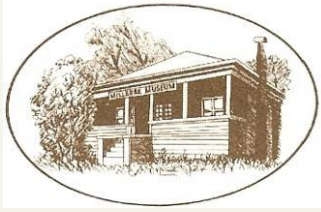
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**MHS OFFICERS – 2018-19**

**John Muniz, President**

**Paul Larson, 1st Vice-President**

**Joe Teresi, 2nd Vice-President**

**Gaetane Andrews, Secretary**

**Vern Bruce, Treasurer**

**Mary Vella Treseler, Parliamentarian**

**Dorothy Semke, Curator**

**Tom Dawdy, Historian & Carriage House Curator**

**Ray Gier, Museum Facilitator**

**Joe Teresi, Newsletter Editor**

**C A L E N D A R   O F   E V E N T S**

**Wednesday, October 17:** MHS Field Trip to Colma Historical Association Museum

- Join us for a guided tour of the Colma Historical Association's Museum, Train Depot, and Blacksmith Shop, followed by lunch at *Black Bear Diner* (10:00 am to 2:00 pm)
- Meet at 10:00 am at Millbrae Museum for carpooling to Colma
- Please RSVP to Joe Teresi at 455-4887 by Wednesday, October 10

**Friday, October 19:** 2018 Millbrae Man, Woman, & Student of the Year Dinner

Green Hills Country Club, 500 Ludeman Lane

- No-Host Cocktails at 6:00 pm
  - Dinner at 7:00 pm
- Reservations required — call John Muniz at 455-3472 for an invitation

**Fourth Wednesdays of the Month:** Millbrae Historical Society Board Meetings, 7:00 pm,  
Millbrae Museum, 420 Poplar Avenue. MHS members and guests are welcome to attend!

**Millbrae Historical Society Museum Operating Hours**

**Millbrae Museum:** Saturdays, 12:00 noon to 4:00 pm

**Millbrae Train Museum:** Saturdays, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm